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ETHNIC MARKETS AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN AMERICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE REDLAND HARVEST MARKET VILLAGE IN SOUTH DADE, FLORIDA

By Carmen Castellanos Meeks

A DISSERTATION

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ETHNIC MARKETS AND THE EMPOWERMENT
OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN AMERICA:
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Among the ever-growing studies on globalization and economic development, research studies focused on specific women’s issues are few and far between. An increasing concentration of immigrant women in the ethnic markets across the United States has raised interest into the motivation and rationality behind these women in choosing this entrepreneurial niche as a main venue to enter the labor market in the North American economy. The implications of this phenomenon, both for the women involved and for the local economy, need to be ascertained and analyzed.

This dissertation is a case study that uses the ethnographic method and several ethnographic techniques, such as archival research, focus groups, participant observation, and in-depth interviews, as means of exploring this research problem. The main goal of this study is to investigate the socio-economic relationship between immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean and The Redland Harvest Market Village in South Dade County, Florida. It seeks to understand why these immigrant women choose this ethnic market as a venue to enter the local labor market. This study examines the impact upon these women’s livelihoods caused by their participation in the ethnic market as well
as the ethnic market itself as a modifier of both immigrant women’s relations of class, ethnicity and gender; and of the local economy framed within the Cuban economic enclave.

This case study is guided by the following research questions. Do immigrant women improve their socio-economic status via incorporation into the ethnic market? Do immigrant women increase their sense of “empowerment” and “well-being” via incorporation into the ethnic market?

Employing primary data, including 36 in-depth interviews of immigrant women working in The Redland Harvest Market Village in South Dade County, Florida, this case study identifies a variety of socio-economic elements that allowed for the separation of the findings into two conclusion sets: analytical and theoretical. Within the analytical conclusions, this case study points out several socio-economic variables. Immigrant women’s livelihood is identified as the unit of analysis and its components are the main independent variables. Income is identified as the main dependent variable to modify the independent variables.

At The Redland Harvest Market Village, immigrant women participate under certain conditions that limit their production value. Only Cash transactions and the low market value of the commodities offered in this ethnic market, yield a very limited income that constrains these women to a marginal and alternative subdivision of the informal sector within the local economy. However, this participation allows them to acquire some retailing skills useful in future entrepreneur ventures. In their private sphere, these women experience a perceivable gain in decision-making power within their family structure, despite obtaining limited financial independence.
Within the theoretical conclusions, this study reveals similar levels of variation consistent with previous studies of female immigrants groups in the U.S. These women’s socio-economic livelihood categories of ethnicity, class, educational level, labor skills and family structure hold patterns of similitude with women involved in zones of mass production in Southeast Asia and those working in the Maquiladora model of mass production on the U.S. Mexican border. The benefits obtained by these women from their participation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* can be measured in terms of their gains in the degree of financial independence, decision-making, spatial mobility, and voice. The process of empowerment is completed through the creation of *agency* in these women livelihoods; an inventory of their *capabilities* or potentialities to live their life; and the actual *functionings* or achievements of their capabilities. The sense of well-being and empowerment achieved through the introduction of a socio-economic modifier, such as earned income, is noticeable in the change in these women’s disposition toward their role as individuals, wives, and mothers living within the community.
Dedication

“To my daughter, Mariella, who represents all the courageous women that throughout history have struggled and prevailed in the face of unfairness.”
Acknowledgements

I have a feeling of gratitude toward these women who so graciously agreed to share their life experiences, as well as allowing the establishment of a learning process based on links of trust. At times it was uncomfortable to intrude into their lives as this research entailed. A desire to express appreciation remains somehow by the only means left available, that of reflecting the reality observed and incorporating the voices heard as accurately as possible in this account and analysis. Throughout this study, the anonymity of the respondents has been kept and the names have been omitted. This learning experience left a deep imprint and an awareness of the difficulty of transferring and expressing the voice of these women through a small study such as this. There were limitations caused by the narrowly defined research instruments in dealing with the richness and complexity of the problem explored. Finally, there is the knowledge of the great moral debt to those whose potential of being heard is constantly limited by the existing economic, social and political constrictions.

In many ways, I cannot see myself as a religious person; however the analogy to a resurrection is how I can describe the work done by Dr. Bruce Bagley as director of my dissertation committee. His extraordinary knowledge and sense of organization and methodology made possible the revitalization and completion of this study. I am forever grateful for his generous sharing of his most valuable resources, time and knowledge, to guide me forward. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTORY SECTION

1.1. Overview

This dissertation examines the level of social and economic empowerment and sense of well-being experienced by immigrant women through their participation in the South Florida ethnic markets. Using quantitative and qualitative techniques including focus groups, participant observation, and in-depth interviews with a group of South Florida immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean, this ethnographic study explores these women’s opinions of their immigrant status in the United States, their understandings of their role in the immigrant labor force, and the ethnic market as an agent of change in their livelihood configuration. This opening chapter of the dissertation presents the background of this research, identifies the study problem, describes its significance and key concepts, and introduces an overall view of the research instruments used. As a final note, this chapter points out the research’s limitations and introduces the dissertation’s structural overview.

Ethnic entrepreneurship is present among immigrant women throughout the U.S. and is a common practice among women coming from both low- and high-income countries. One such form of entrepreneurship is participation in an “ethnic market”, in which immigrants sell goods that are associated with their particular country or culture. An ethnic market refers to a place which ethnic shoppers frequent for available goods as
well as its role in maintaining ethnic identity (Waldinger, Aldricsh, & Ward, 1990). In this study, an ethnic market does not refer to brick and mortar establishments, such as ethnic grocery stores or restaurants, but rather to small, informal establishments in a flea market environment. Although it is a typical part of the socio-economic landscape for immigrants in parts of the U.S., particularly for women, there has been no systematic study undertaken to determine the benefits and the degree of socio-economic empowerment obtained by immigrant women participating in ethnic markets, as well as the real role played by ethnic markets in a local economy.

Within the ethnic market, immigrant women take on several economic roles as employees, self-employed entrepreneurs, and employers in their quest for income to alleviate economic hardship or to fulfill their needs. These women engage in multiple enterprises and economic strategies that reflect their economic marginalization along with their increasing levels of domestic financial responsibility in the new land (Mandel, 2004). While this phenomenon in not unique to South Florida, the participation of women in ethnic markets throughout the United States has been estimated by several researchers to be high (Benería, 2003; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983, 1986, 1992; Hondagnu-Sotelo, 1996, 2001; Leonard, 1998, 2001; McGaffey, 1987; Nijamp, 2004; Segura, 1984; Villanueva, 2002). The subject of women’s participation in ethnic markets has only recently begun to surface as an area of significant concern to ethnic entrepreneurship. This new interest is spurred by concerns about the impact of globalization and the movement of the female labor force to industrialized countries.

To better understand the socio-economic relationship established between immigrant women and ethnic markets, this research conducted a case study in The
Redland Harvest Market Village, located in Dade County, Florida. A group of immigrant women from Caribbean and Latin American backgrounds in this ethnic market was selected to participate as subjects for this case study. This study helps to identify the level of social and economic empowerment and the sense of well-being experienced by immigrant women during their incorporation into the informal labor market through ethnic markets. The results will be used to shed light on aspects of the socio-economic role of immigrant women in the U.S. and will serve as a starting point for additional research into ethnic entrepreneurship in other contexts.

This study attempts to contribute to the understanding of the possible gains and/or losses that immigrant women face upon their entrance into the ethnic market, with a particular emphasis on the unique cultural and demographic makeup that exists in South Florida. This study also examines the benefits and constraints faced by immigrant women as a labor force in an ethnic enclave such as the Cuban economic enclave and the possible changes observed in these women’s livelihood configurations as they incorporate themselves into the South Florida labor market in increasing numbers.

1.2. Problem Statement

The incorporation of immigrant women into the U.S. labor market is an important subject for the understanding of ethnic entrepreneurship. In recent years, however, this issue has become increasingly relevant for the national economy, as more and more immigrant women enter the U.S. labor market due to globalization of the economy and the conceptualization of immigrant women as a source of cheap labor. Any attempt to explore immigrant women’s role in ethnic entrepreneurship will require a far better
understanding of the immigrant woman’s socio-economic experience than is currently available in the literature. The majority of the research on immigrant women has focused on formal economic settings, such as exported oriented zones like the *maquiladoras* on the U.S. Mexican border (Cravey, 1998; Fernandez-Kelly, 1883; Fussell, 2000; Lim, 1983) and informal economic activities such as street vendors, child care, and housekeeping (Ehrenreich & Russell-Hochschild, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996, 2001; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Romero, 1992). Little attention has been paid to ethnic markets, and even less to immigrant women who participate in these markets. As a result, social scientists have little idea of the socio-economic impact the entrance into ethnic markets has had in these women’s lives.

The entrance of immigrant women into the U.S. labor market through ethnic markets does not necessarily guarantee gains in their economic and social status. To explore this issue it is necessary to address gender as an analytical category and examine its relationship to social stratification, particularly class positions; the degree of female participation in both domestic and public spheres and the understanding of the transformations that take place in these women’s private spheres and within their households; and finally, the economical and political position of women and its relationship to development and capitalist systems (Benería & Roldán, 1987; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Peréz, 1990).

The proposed research is located at the intersection of three approaches in a broad body of literature. The first approach points out the benefits economic development and globalization have brought to women’s livelihoods. Studies made by Lim (1983), Leonard (1998), Spinal and Grasmuck (1997, 1998), Dollar and Gatti (1999), Seguino
(2000), and Kabeer (2000) have pointed out the benefits obtained by women participating in export-oriented zones in Southeast Asia. The second approach emphasizes how women have been exploited by development and globalization, since they are seen mainly as a source of cheap labor. Fernadez-Kelly (1983), Cravey (1998), and Fussell (2000) examined the female experience at the *maquiladora* economic sector in the U.S.-Mexican border. The third approach, found in studies by Boserup (1970), Susan Tiano (1986), Acosta-Belen and Bose (1990), Benería (1982 and 2003), Bolles (1998), Sen and Grown (1987), Ong (1987), and Feldman (1992), posit that economic development and globalization have put women in a position where they enjoy some gains and a certain degree of economic empowerment in their private livelihoods, but at the same time keep them isolated, marginalized, and exploited within the society.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

By exploring the dynamic of the interaction between immigrant women and a South Florida ethnic market, this research proposes to determine “What level of social and economic empowerment and sense of well-being is experienced by immigrant women with their incorporation into ethnic markets?” The geographical area where this case study took place includes an ethnic market, *Redland Harvest Market Village*, located in South Dade County, Florida.

There are two main questions that this dissertation seeks to answer.

1. Do immigrant women improve their socio-economic status via incorporation into the ethnic market?
2. Do immigrant women increase their sense of “empowerment” and “well-being” via incorporation into the ethnic market?

This study attempts to answer these main research questions through the use of ethnographic tools, such as participant observation, focus groups and interviews, applied to a group of immigrant women from Latin American and Caribbean backgrounds currently working in an ethnic market. The rationale behind the selection of immigrant women who call South Florida home as knowledgeable informers for this study is based on geographic as well as cultural reasons. Geographically, Miami is a major portal for Latin American and Caribbean trade, and a point of entry for the influx of immigrants into the U.S. There is a heavy presence of immigrant women in the everyday economic activities of ethnic markets in South Florida. Immigrant women are seen as facilitators of ethnic material goods and as major elements in the establishment of ethnic social interaction among immigrants and/or moral support groups. The cultural reasons for this selection are comprised of: 1) the invisible value of immigrant women’s economic activities as a result of being considered an extension of their reproductive task, 2) the feminization of the global labor market where immigrant women are seen as a source of cheap labor, and 3) the changing profile of immigrant women from mere passive companions of male immigrants to autonomous economic agents, migrating on their own initiative.

The attempt of this study, then, is not to generate results that can be applied to the entrepreneurial immigrant women’s experience in the U.S., rather it is to generate a theoretical framework that can identify the key aspects in the socio-economic interrelationship among immigrant women and ethnic markets. By generating such a
framework, identifying key variables, and looking for relationships between these variables, ways for retesting and refining these results in a variety of settings can begin to be formulated.

1.4. Review of Relevant Literature and Theory

To explore the puzzle of immigrant women’s performance in ethnic markets either as wage employees or as entrepreneurs, it is necessary to depart from the conviction that immigrant women’s issues cannot be studied in isolation and separated from the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which they are immersed (Benería, 2003). The questions that emerge as relevant to immigrant women’s economic activities in the ethnic market are diverse and multifaceted, influenced by the cultural and socio-economic conditions in which these women live across South Florida. While it is important to focus on economic factors within the process of development in order to conceptualize variables such as poverty, growth, and opportunities among immigrant women in South Florida, other factors such as patriarchal norms, traditions, institutions, and values affecting immigrant women’s livelihoods are also key to understanding their condition and subordination. At the same time, it is not enough just to analyze labor market variables to understand immigrant women’s incorporation in the labor force; other factors contribute as well, such as: limitations experienced by immigrant women because of cultural practices, gender constructions, job opportunities, immigrant women’s networks and social contacts, migratory status and immigrant women’s spatial mobility.
1.4.1. The Question of Economic Development Being Beneficial to Women

In order to understand the gains and benefits that economic development and globalization have brought into women’s livelihoods with their incorporation into the labor market, it is necessary to make an examination of the trajectory of female participation in formal and informal economic settings. A variety of studies, such as the ones made by Lim (1983), Dollar and Gatti (1999), and Seguino (2000), have analyzed the effects of export-oriented, labor-intense manufacturing relying on low-cost production for global markets in Southeast Asia. These studies have shown gains in women’s increased autonomy and bargaining power as a result of employment. Kabeer (2000) has pointed out that women’s paid work has been associated with an increase in the “power to choose.” However, women participating in these export-processing zones have been called “weak winners” (Kabeer, 2000), taking into account the many existing constraints that these women still face in their livelihood configurations. These constraints relate to gender relations, social restrictions in the division of labor, lack of women’s agency, and household-market connections (Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Lim, 1983; Seguino, 2000).

However, the Asian results cannot be applied to all countries. The maquiladora sector on the U.S.-Mexican border represents a model of export-oriented production that over time has not brought gains for a large majority of women participating on it. Multinational manufacturers, in their drive to keep production costs low, have taken advantage of women’s labor market constrictions, due to their limited assets and capabilities, forcing them to accept unfavorable terms of employment (Cravey, 1998; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Fussell, 2000; Lim, 1983). Differences between these two
export-oriented industries are due to varying factors having to do with labor availability, degrees of wage inequality, and the dynamics of the labor market with respect to male/female employment.

Earlier studies allow the appreciation of the women’s role and condition in different socio-economic contexts and the importance of women in the production process (Boserup, 1970). Throughout these studies also can be visualized the different stages of the development process in both rural and urban environments, and the differential impact that economic development has had in the status of women and men. (Acosta Belén & Bose, 1990; Bolles, 1988; Benería, 1982; Sen & Grown, 1987).

Rosario Spinal and Sherri Grasmuck (1997 and 1998) point out that development programs have neglected to take into account the position of women in households. As a result, women see an increase in their workload and, at the same time, experience an undermining of their economic autonomy and a weakening of their bargaining position within the home. The sexual division of labor requires women to combine, within their households, their productive role outside the home with their reproductive role as wife, mother, and homemaker (Leonard, 1998).

To provide a theoretical base line in order to understand polices of empowerment and well being, it was necessary to turn to the capabilities and functionings approach (Nussbaum, 2000, 2003; Robeyns, 2003, 2005; Sen, 1985a and 1985b), related to the concept of human development. Understanding capabilities as ways to expand the multidimensional potential and functionings of individuals, affecting each of every one’s potential to be and to do (Sen, 1985). It was important to distinguish between capabilities and functionings, in the sense that the former represent the ability to do what is possible
and desired, the latter is the actual achievement. Capabilities are considered the ability to remove or lessen constrictions in individuals’ lives so they are able to obtain a higher degree of freedom to live the kind of life they choose for themselves. However, it is the functioning vector achieved that determines an individual’s well-being. Desired capabilities can differ due to socio-economic conditions and cultural factors. The concept of what an individual is able to be and do might calls for precise goals and can vary across the social scale and across regions. Several authors have developed an inventory of capabilities (Nussbaum, 2003; Robeyns, 2003) that can be used to devise indicators of well-being or quality of life for setting social goals. Furthermore, in order to move from a simple list of capabilities into a domain of policy and practical action that can transform capabilities into functionings for each of these women, it is necessary to evaluate the basic conditions essential for a good life. A list of basic needs for this specific group of women should include:

- Being able to work under humane and acceptable working conditions within the local labor market.
- Being able to have an average socio-economic status.
- Being able to have an average degree of spatial mobility.
- Being able to improve their cluster of assets and degree of access to the mainstream community.
- Being able to benefit from a gain of permanent decision-making power within their family circle.
- Being able to elevate into larger mainstream entrepreneurial ventures.
• Being able to input into the household income in order to satisfy their family’s consumption needs.
• Being able to accumulate minimal wealth (financial capital).
• Being able to have autonomy in allocating their time in domestic work, family care, and paid work outside the home.

Several studies have analyzed the degree of empowerment and the lasting effects of the benefits that paid work promotes in women’s livelihoods (Benería, 2003; Feldman, 1992; Ong, 1987; Tiano, 1986). The concepts behind thesis of integration, thesis of marginalization, and thesis of exploitation have been used to analyze elements such as the level of immigrant women’s participation in the work force and the degree of rupture within patriarchal and traditional family structures. On the other hand, issues such as female subordination and isolation from the production process and political spheres, as well as the conceptualization of immigrant women as a source of cheap labor, are often contradictory aspects of immigrant women’s participation in the process of industrialization (Tiano, 1986). The analysis of women’s agency, of changing gender identities, and of women’s capacity to contest oppressive practices at work or in their private lives, in general adds important dimensions to an evaluation of immigrant women’s entrepreneurial activities.

In order to look into the ethnic market and the impact that it has had on the livelihoods of immigrant women in South Florida, it becomes necessary to first come to terms with the conceptualization of the immigrant woman as an individual and her social economic status in the United States (Segura, 1984). Second, it is necessary to explore the dynamics of the U.S. labor market and how immigrant women fit into it. Third, we
need to examine ethnic markets as an informal entrepreneurial manifestation of immigrant groups within the U.S. economy. These elements cannot be analyzed one from another as separate entities; on the contrary, in order to obtain a logical understanding of the problem, they must be woven together along with social and economic variables.

1.4.2. Miami as Ethnic Enclave

Since the sixties, groups of varied nationalities have entered the Port of Miami in search of a better life. According to Portes and Stepick (1993), with each major immigrant wave, Miami has experienced a different influx in the labor market of female immigrants as a source of cheap labor. From Cuban women in the sixties and early seventies to Haitian and Nicaraguan women in the eighties, each of these immigrant influxes has encountered a different reception upon their arrival in Miami. Economic and political interests and timing have influenced the degree of support received by the new arrivals. Cubans depend on their counterparts for support to relocate to different segments of the labor market in an ethnic enclave dominated by Cuban entrepreneurs. Cuban women in Miami also have favorable circumstances due to their political exile status and the influence that local Cuban entrepreneurs have on Washington’s decisions. Miami’s Cuban community has had a considerable degree of influence on the immigration policies which favor of Cuban immigrants in recent decades. Haitians and Nicaraguans, on the other hand, encounter rejection and hostility in immigration policies and local opinion (Portes & Stepick, 1993). Miami, as a Southern metropolitan area, is a low wage town for native-born workers as well as for foreign men and women. Immigrant Hispanic women have joined African-American women on the lowest rung of Miami’s occupational
ladder. The poverty index for immigrant women has increased due to the fact that they tend to be heads of households but with limited skills, language barriers, poor education and in most cases illegal migratory status, which creates problems in moving into mainstream or formal economic activities (Waldinger, 2001).

Sheldon has argued that immigrant women’s opportunity structures are determined by key elements or assets, such as personal, family, and contextual attributes (Sheldon, 1996). The immigrant women’s personal elements to be considered when answering the main question of this study are: levels of education, language deficiency, and age. Family elements include variables such as marital status and living arrangements. Contextual attributes have to do with the immigrant women’s degree of mobility, migratory status, contact networks and information channels, the market conditions for ethnic and non-ethnic products, and the access conditions for entrepreneurship (Grant, 1996; McGaffey, 1987; Robertson, 1990; Waldinger, 1990).

Immigrant women arrive in South Florida often lacking the legal migratory status, the skills and the capital needed to start a business. They are outsiders in a new land, attempting to work and build an entrepreneurial niche in the local economy without the basic elements for a successful entrepreneurial venture. Immigrant women need to obtain a legal status that would allow them to work lawfully and participate in government sponsored micro-credit programs. They must acquire the necessary information to start a business. They need to obtain the capital necessary, hire the right workers, learn the training and skills needed to run a business, find out how to relate to costumers, handle business competition, and deal with biased economic policies towards immigrant entrepreneurship (Waldinger et al., 1990).
Once in South Florida, immigrant women become dependent on one another to function beyond the ethnic community. This dependency leads newcomers to settle in neighborhoods densely populated with other immigrants and work in ethnic niches where their compatriots and relatives cluster (Borjas, 1992; Waldinger, 2001). At this point, two essential elements of the immigrant experience in South Florida need to be taken into consideration: the spatial entrapment of immigrant women and the gendered outcomes of the social networks and/or contacts. First, the geographic element plays a critical role in the analysis of immigrant women’s economic activities in the ethnic market. The range of immigrant women’s economic opportunities is determined by their degree of mobility and their residential location. If immigrant women are “spatially entrapped”, their opportunities are likely to be more constrained (Hanson & Pratt, 1995). It is important to mention that immigrant women’s primary involvement in domestic work and child care responsibilities is a source of economic vulnerability for them, not only because this is unpaid work but also because it diminishes women’s mobility and autonomy within the labor market. Immigrant women’s networks and social contact outcomes are gendered. Immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean come from a patriarchal family structure where women’s circle of friends are often other women and relatives, which is more likely to produce gender segregated jobs. In contrast, men’s networks and social contacts have a wider range and are more likely to contain people from outside their family circle. As a result, the job outcomes for men have a larger ratio of job contacts than for women (Hanson & Pratt, 1991; Portes, 1995; Waldinger, 2001).

In an attempt to cross the barriers to female participation in the formal economy and balance domestic obligations with the need for paid work, immigrant women in
South Florida end up in the informal economy out of necessity rather than choice. The informal economy is considered as economic activity that is not recorded in official statistics, and which operates in the absence of administrative monitoring and control (Leonard, 2001). The occupations that women have in the informal economy tend to mirror those in the formal economy; thus, the informal economy often reinforces the inferior status of women and the gender divisions prevalent in formal employment (Leonard, 2001). They are often paid less than men for similar tasks or are concentrated in low-paid, gender specific activities. Immigrant women’s ability to earn an income is often fragmented and irregular, being closely bound up with their household responsibilities. Immigrant women are ideal recruits for the ethnic market’s informal employment practices, leading to a trend of greater flexibility in the labor market.

Immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean with low skills and limited education have found odd jobs and “off the books” employment in Miami’s informal economy. For a substandard wage, women work as domestics and flower vendors on streets corners, while others find jobs as factory workers and seamstresses. They have become an easily exploitable workforce that can be brought in and laid off to accommodate industries with fluctuating labor market demand. Du Rivage and Jacobs (1989) suggest that undocumented immigrant women can enhance their invisibility by working from home, and they tend to be employed informally rather than formally.

In South Florida, society domestic service represents a very large proportion of immigrant women’s informal employment (Ehrenreich & Hochshild, 2002; Man, 2004). Private domestic service often involves long demanding work hours and close employer supervision. One significant factor posed by immigrant women in choosing ethnic
markets as a source of income is their involvement with unpaid work at home and childcare responsibilities. The ethnic market appears to immigrant women as a suitable choice due to its informal structure and flexible schedule. First, it allows immigrant women to juggle the double burden of domestic responsibilities at home and paid work outside. Second, the ethnic market appears to immigrant women as an easy and fast avenue for incorporation into the local labor market. At the same time, the ethnic market allows immigrant women to avoid the alienation of private domestic occupations

Several studies (Ehrenreich & Russell-Hochschild, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996; 2001; Romero, 1992; Segura, 1984) have pointed out that immigrant women who join the workforce have often considered their work a “supplement” to family income. A low rate of full-time participation in the labor force for recent immigrants combined with their relative high rate of part-time work reflects the attempts of many immigrant women to balance the cultural pressure to stay home with the need to contribute to a household income. It is possible that the part-time nature and flexible hours of the ethnic market occupations provide immigrant women with the opportunity and flexibility of moving from unpaid domestic work toward paid work but maintain them in an exceptionally unstable and low-paid segment of the economy.

The concepts of economic niche and ethnic enclave are fundamental in the analysis of the supply and demand of immigrant women in the U.S. labor market. Labor opportunities for immigrant women in the U.S. vary according to the time of arrival in a city and the types of economic niches in which they perform. An economic niche is defined as an industry employing at least one thousand people, in which a group representation is at least 150 percent of its share of total employment (Waldinger, 1990).
Niches may provide a protected environment, not just an orbit of jobs to which the ethnic people of any group may have privileged access, but also an arena in which they are treated more favorably than in jobs of lower ethnic density (Waldinger, 1990). On the other hand, an ethnic enclave is conceptualized as an element of segregation within a particular territorial configuration, geographically distinct and encompassing a self-supporting economy that itself generated a variety of inputs and outputs (Waldinger, 2001).

Miami as a large metropolitan area with a considerable number of immigrant populations from Hispanic and Caribbean background has been able to develop as an ethnic economic enclave, specifically a Cuban economic enclave (Portes & Stepick, 1993), with a stable market in which small enterprises have firsthand access to a supply of cheap labor. Some key elements in immigrant women’s assimilation and placement in South Florida economic niches and ethnic enclaves are the social networks or contacts established by newcomers with relatives or other immigrants. These social contacts and/or networks offer immigrant women the assistance necessary to identify the “appropriate” ethnic economic niche and economic enclave through which immigrant women should attempt to enter the South Florida labor market.

The measurement and understanding of immigrant women’s performance in the ethnic market cannot be achieved without a full conceptualization of ethnic markets as a manifestation of ethnic entrepreneurship in an informal economic frame. Ethnic markets originated from the demands of newcomers for specific goods and services to satisfy their culturally defined needs. Ethnic businesses are often based on an informal foundation composed of their use of cash payments, hidden patterns in trade transactions, family
input, and immigrant status of some of their members. These actions immediately deprive them of government support in the form of official loans and technical assistance. Ethnic enterprises often have a predisposition toward small business activity with lower capital investment and less formal ownership and financial conditions, while strengthening their reliance on group and family contacts and ethnic-cultural networks (Masurel, Nijkamp, & Vindingni, 2004; Waldinger, 1996). Ironically, the success of such a business is built partially upon the existence of the spatially segregated ethnic communities they serve (Garcia, 1996; Portes & Stepick, 1993).

Immigrant women are perhaps in a position to benefit from their performance in the ethnic markets. However, the possible gains in issues of gender equality at all levels of society need to be examined. Immigrant women’s economic, social, and political rights must be recognized, and their voices need to be heard without patriarchal constraints and gender inequality. The ultimate goal of the interrelationship between immigrant women and the labor market should be a long lasting effect of these benefits resulting in a sense of dignity and well being for immigrant women in their livelihood configurations. The transformation of the South Florida labor market is a result of economic restructuring; neoliberal policies, and reorganization of production experienced by both high and low income countries during the past three decades. In an effort to understand the tendencies toward the informal labor market and increasing inequalities (Benería, 2003), it is necessary to analyze the gender dimensions of these processes.

This study attempts to analyze immigrant women’s socio-economic experiences in a South Florida ethnic market framed within the Cuban ethnic economic enclave. And at the same time it seeks to set parallels and contrasts among immigrant women’s
economic activities in the South Florida local economy and immigrant women’s economic experiences elsewhere.

This study contributes to the existing literature on immigrant women’s economic activities in a high-income country such as the U.S. by attempting to fill in the gap existent among the different approaches in immigrant women’s issues. The study’s goal is to point out the complex socio-economic interrelationship between immigrant women and the ethnic market within an ethnic enclave such as the South Florida Cuban enclave. This study enlightens the understanding of issues such as economic functionalism in the South Floridian labor market, the role played by ethnic markets as a source of economic output in the local economy, and the role of income provider for immigrant women. Finally and most importantly, this micro-study attempts to establish conclusions about the real socio-economic value of ethnic markets for South Florida immigrant women’s livelihoods, the degree of provisioning, well-being, and empowerment that immigrant women experience with their participation in the ethnic market, the lasting period of these gains, and the degree of socio-economic inclusion and voice in mainstream society.

1.5. Subsidiary Research Questions

In order to find possible answers to the main inquiry in this research, it is necessary to examine three key elements of immigrant women’s livelihood configurations in South Florida. Race, class, and gender interrelate with each other to produce what some authors have called a “triple oppression faced by immigrant women in U.S. society” (Fernandez-Kelly, 1989; Segura, 1984; Villanueva, 2004). With the entrance of immigrant women into South Florida ethnic markets, do these women have a
fundamental role in enhancing the economic position of their households? And, as a consequence of this new economic role, do they obtain a better bargaining position to challenge and undermine the patriarchal family structure? Racial practices create stereotype images of immigrant women, their families, communities, cultural identities, and spatial locations. In South Florida, do immigrant women who join ethnic markets have a subordinate position in society? Immigrant women experience occupational segregation in low paying sectors of the economy, residential segregation, and their appearance as perpetual outsiders or foreigners is considered by many quite normal and expected. Women gendered responsibilities for home and family conflict with their personal quest for better skills and higher wages.

A series of subsidiary questions flow from these initial questions.

1. Under what conditions do women participate in the ethnic markets?

2. What factors influence the degree of spatial and economic mobility and the socio-economic opportunities available to immigrant women in South Florida?

3. What are the major personal constraints faced by immigrant women in South Florida?

4. Do the South Florida economic enclave and niches constrain the economic mobility of immigrant women?

5. Do networks play a key role in their selection of South Florida for settlement in the new land?

6. What strategies do immigrant women employ given the constraints and opportunities faced in the labor market?
7. Does the ethnic market become a cause of isolation and economic entrapment away from the mainstream economy for immigrant women? Or, is the ethnic market a kinder alternative providing a more viable route to upward economic mobility and social and economical hierarchal empowerment for immigrant women?

8. Is the ethnic market an instrument of exploitation and subordination for immigrant women due to demand in the U.S. labor market for cheap labor?

9. Does the entrance of immigrant women into the labor market instill change in any way the structure of the patriarchal family?

10. Does the participation of immigrant women in the ethnic market provide them with socioeconomic emancipation and voice?

11. Are ethnic markets just a manifestation of economic functionalism bringing economic growth for the local economy but failing to provide socio-economic empowerment and wellbeing in immigrant women’s life?

1.6. Methods

As an ethnographic study, this project is based on qualitative methods of data collection which allow the researcher to identify variables that can be further evaluated through descriptive and analytical statistical research. This research is designed as a case study for which an ethnic market located in South Dade County has been chosen, *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. In this ethnic market, approximately half of the laborers are immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean. A group of 36 of these women was chosen to serve as in-depth knowledgeable informers or interviewers in this
case study with non-statistical data. This study surveys the relationship established between 36 immigrant women and a South Dade ethnic market and further explores the implications this relationship has upon these women’s livelihood configurations.

The setting for this micro-study, *The Redland Harvest Market Village* located in Princeton, Florida, is a private corporation founded in 1983. It has 340 individual stands where people offer their clientele different kinds of products: jewelry, clothing, plants, personal hygiene and household products, home and clothes accessories, small pets and pet supplies, CDs and cassettes, prepared foods, light furniture, bicycles, toys, and small tools. Vendors come from countries such as El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, and Argentina.

The criteria used for the sample selection is based on the fact that this research is in large part an ethnographic study. Therefore, the sample needs to be representative of *the Redland Harvest Market Village* women’s population in order to estimate the parameters of the market’s female population as a whole, especially in terms of gender comparisons. The primary method of this case study is to present structured in-depth interviews with immigrant women working at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. This research’s interests focus on their motivations, feelings, and understandings of their immigrant women status quo in South Florida thus the method is primarily intensive and qualitative rather than extensive and quantitative. As an ethnographic study, participant observation plays a major role in the interaction with these women and the opportunity to look into the main aspects of their working lives. Another important element of this study is the use of focus groups as a means of initial conversations with immigrant women.
working at the market, in order to choose and define relevant categories of variables to be used later in the questionnaire.

Thirty-six immigrant women were selected from those already participating in this ethnic market’s economic activities. A systematic selection was used to choose the women to be interviewed during the data gathering process. From a total of 340 stands existent in the market, every 10th stand was approached. If a woman was working there, she was interviewed. In a situation where just a man or men were working in the stand, the next stand was approached and so on. The interviews were administered to a group of women that represented 10.6% of the total market population.

For the interviewing process an individual questionnaire in English or Spanish was used. A Creole translator was used when it was necessary in the case of a Haitian interviewee. This questionnaire was structured into a group of short answer questions, “yes” or “no” questions, and a group of open-ended questions. In this questionnaire, the interviewed women were asked to discuss demographic questions referring to personal data such as date of birth, marital status, place of birth, number of years living in the U.S., working schedules, annual income, and questions about the different occupations they have held since entering the U.S. The open-ended questions examined issues such as reasons for leaving their country of origin, reasons for choosing the U.S. and ultimately South Dade as a destination, immigrant women’s social and economic levels in their country of origin and later here in the U.S., and questions concerning the adjustment to and assimilation into their new culture and if their decision to immigrate was influenced by a family member or was made of their own volition.
For the design of the questionnaire used in the in-depth interview, some inquires were borrowed from Rosario Spinal’s and Sherri Grasmuck’s study: *Gender, Household and Informal Entrepreneurship in the Dominican Republic* (Spinal & Grasmuck, 1997). In this study, the researchers take into account the position of women in households and the increase of women’s workload with her duties as homemaker and wageworker outside of her home. At the same time, this study examines women’s undermining economic autonomy and/or weak bargaining position within her home. After some small modifications, the questions presented were the following: What is the general profile of *The Redland Harvest Market Village*? How much income and employment is generated from this market? What is the nature of the market networks supporting such business? How do immigrant women’s micro-enterprises characterize themselves in terms of the type of business, longevity, size assets, and reliance on family labor? What is the range of household structures in this sector? Are there significant numbers of female-headed households? Do women contribute a larger proportion of their earnings to the welfare of their families? How important are ethnic market economic activities in the overall economic survival of the household? How does employment in the ethnic market relate to power relations within households? How do families influence, support, or constrain the way women perform in their business? Considering the role of the ethnic market in the local economy, what is the “ideological profile” of these immigrant women? Do these immigrant women identify themselves as entrepreneurs or workers?

The use of in-depth interviewing as an instrument of investigation into the personal experiences of the women chosen as the knowledgeable informers for this project allowed exploring the realities of these women’s lives. In-depth interviews can
provide enough time to establish an atmosphere of trust and a setting that encourages the
free flow that is conducive to reminiscence and reflection so that an opportunity is
provided for the full story to emerge. The narrations of these women, when transcribed in
full and concrete detail, became the data for analysis and interpretation. The interview
began with questions about personal data and then open-ended questions were presented.
During these interviews each woman reflected aloud on past and present experiences and
considered their significance in her life as an immigrant, as a woman, as a family
member, and as a worker.

1.7. Data Collection and Analysis

Three distinct but inter-related stages in the data collection process were selected
in the design of this ethnographic study. First, at a national stage, data was collected from
secondary and archival sources. Analysis of grounded theories and annual reports of
Labor Market statistics served as a basis for comparative purposes in my project; analysis
of publications and major policy documents as well as analysis of proposed and passed
legislation. Second, during a series of focus groups, data concerning the middle stage
context was collected. These focus groups involved an initial contact with immigrant
women working in this ethnic market, a sort of superficial inventory of their opinions on
the socio-economic impact on their livelihood configurations caused by their experience
in the ethnic market. Questions open for discussion were posed. These questions included
such queries as their reasons for immigrating to the U.S. and their feelings about being an
immigrant woman in the U.S. These inquiries were made as an attempt to establish
personal contact with these women, and at the same time to try to get baseline
information regarding gendered constraints such as their degree of access and assets, i.e. their degree of mobility, human capital, their social norms, and the formal rules that constitute their socioeconomic environment (Mandel, 2004). The contrast found in the data collected here with grounded theories, allowed for establishing patterns that could then be used in the development of general statements and the design of the questionnaire applied further in this research (Potter, 1996).

Third, the data gathered from in-depth interviews attempted to collect specific information reflecting immigrant women’s individual and social spheres related to their performance in this ethnic market. By combining interviews with participant observation, which are the key components of ethnographic research (Potter, 1996), this study attempts to understand the presence and performance of immigrant women in this ethnic market and find to what extent these women are socio-economically benefited and/or empowered by it. This study’s goal is to achieve an understanding of the socio-economic circumstances that determine the livelihood configuration of immigrant women participating in this ethnic market. The changing patterns in the role played by immigrant women in the labor market is likely to reflect highly complex personal circumstances that emerge from changes in the confluence of individual women’s personal and contextual attributes. Participant observation assisted throughout the entire data collection process by allowing a hands-on opportunity to interact with and explore the daily activities of these women while working at the market.

One of the main objectives of this research is to provide a qualitative description of these women’s socio-economic activities within the market. It is an attempt to obtain an estimate of the mechanisms of unreported transactions in retail, trade, and services
performed by these immigrant women in this market. At the same time, with the use of a qualitative approach, this case study intends to provide key elements to the rationale of immigrant women’s participation in this ethnic market under the varying conditions of their lives.

This research used a cross-sectional design. The data collection method was a closed-ended survey instrument designed to measure the variables that were being examined in this study. The variables obtained by the process of data collection were initially grouped according to similar social and demographic characteristics. Once placed in groups, comparisons were established between them using cross table layoffs. The results of these variable comparisons were associated with the degree of access and assets of these immigrant women’s livelihood configurations allowing for identification of specific economic and social interactions that occur among the individual makeup of these immigrant women, the society in which they partake, and the ethnic market in which they participate. The data analysis for this research was conducted by using the computer software SPSS. Frequency distributions, cross table layoffs, reliability procedure and correlation analysis were used as statistical procedures.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

As discussed previously, it is not the intent of this research to select a representative sample of the immigrant women population participating in ethnic markets in the U.S. or South Florida. In fact, it is unlikely that such a sample could be generated, given the extraordinarily wide range of ethnic markets and immigrant women’s backgrounds. Rather, the intent is to begin a process that will allow the development of a
theory of immigrant women’s socio-economic experience in ethnic markets. This theory
can then be retested in varying contexts and refined. Ideally, the results will be
generalized not from a sample of a population, but from the sample of the theoretical
framework. That framework can then be applied to other settings and refined in order to
allow generalizations from the theory to the wider populations.

This study focuses on a very specific group of immigrant women who are
participating in an ethnic market in South Dade. It should be pointed out that this study
cannot be used to make generalizations about ethnic markets or immigrant women as a
population. It can, however, be used to begin identifying those factors that appear
consistently when studying immigrant women and ethnic markets. This case study’s goal
is to develop a theory of immigrant women participation in the ethnic market that can be
tested in later studies. Further research will also seek to expand the scope of this research
to a wider variety of immigrant women and settings, and will be used to support or
examine theoretical hypotheses about immigrant women’s experiences that are developed
in this study. Additional research can explore whether the factors most influencing
immigrant women participating in this ethnic market are also important to the
experiences of immigrant women in similar situations elsewhere.

The results obtained in this micro-study can be influenced by the limited size of
the sample analyzed. The specifics of origin and size of the sample is not representative
of the entire immigrant women population living in South Florida. This study is limited
to the qualitative analysis of a specific ethnic market in South Florida. Due to the small
overall sample size, there are constraints in applying broader statistical methodologies.
Although the specific results of this study may be significant, application of the more
The replication of the results with another sample group may be necessary to further reinforce the validity of this study. However, this study can enlighten and enrich the conceptualization of immigrant women’s socio-economic experience in ethnic markets and their interrelationship with the labor market in the United States.

1.9. Significance of the Study

Past studies have explored the correlation between immigrant women, labor market opportunities, and immigrant entrepreneurial activities in the U.S. (Ehrenreich & Russell-Hochschild, 2002; Fernandez Kelly & Garcia, 1986; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996, 2001; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Segura, 1984; Waldinger et al., 1990). This study differs from previous ones in that the ethnic market in South Florida is the added factor in the analysis of immigrant women’s entrepreneurial experiences. This research on immigrant women’s participation in an ethnic market as a setting accomplishes several goals. First, it brings together an analysis of economic and social variables. Second, it examines the interrelationship established between immigrant women and ethnic markets. Third, it attempts to explain the character of these interrelationships as one of economic survival and of accumulation of wealth as a rather temporary one. Finally, it explores the socio-economical impact of this relationship upon the livelihood of these immigrant women.

1.10. Organization of the Dissertation

The organization of this dissertation is as follows. Chapter I is an introduction and overview of this micro-study, as well as an introduction of key concepts that underline
this work. This chapter also provides a glimpse of the issues this research addresses. Chapter II presents an introductory review of the literature that guided this study. The discussion focuses on the socio-economic variables present in immigrant women’s livelihoods and their socio-economic profile. This chapter also offers a chronological history of the origin and development of the Miami Cuban Enclave.

Chapter III describes the sources of data to be examined in this study, explains the methods used to conduct the research, and also presents the plan of analysis for this study, taking as baseline ground theories of International Political Economy, Gender, and Development. This chapter explores in detail archival data and focus groups as research methods used to collect initial information about immigrant women involved in ethnic markets and specifically immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village. Finally, participant observation and in-depth interviewing are examined as ethnographic techniques used to carry out the field research. Through the selection of a systematic sample, in-depth interviewing was used to collect data about this group of immigrant women’s individual characteristics.

Chapter IV provides an introductory overview of the subject population. With the female immigrant population of The Redland Harvest Market Village, their social class background, as well as their ethnicity, is explored. This chapter sets the stage for the analysis in this dissertation by presenting the data collected. Throughout the focus groups, participant observation and in-depth interviewing, demographic data on the 36 immigrant women was collected. These women’s opinion of the role played by them as an immigrant labor force in the U.S and the impact of their participation in the ethnic
market in their livelihoods concerning private and public issues is presented and explored.

Chapter V centers the discussion on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The contents of the data will be explained by the use of cross table tabulation of the dependent and independent variables present in this micro-study. Frequency distributions, reliability procedures, and correlation analysis are used as statistical procedures as well.

Chapter VI summarizes and discusses the main findings of this micro-study concerning the interrelationship of these immigrant women and *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, and the socioeconomic impact of this relationship in their livelihoods.

The last section is an epilogue and the final step of this case study. It revisits the setting of this case study, *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. During this reconnection, the status of the women approached previously in this study is explored and updated. Informal interviews or conversations were carried out with the same immigrant women interviewed earlier during the field research. During these informal talks, casual inquires about these women’s current socio-economic state of affairs were posed. There are also simple observations made of these women’s daily interaction within *The Redland Harvest Market Village* environment.
CHAPTER II
GENERAL SCOPE OF THE CASE STUDY

2.1. Overview

This chapter will weave together the main socio-economic characteristics of immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean, participants in a South Florida ethnic market, The Redland Harvest Market Village, and the available literature. These socio-economic characteristics will be determined by the analysis of key demographic data collected during this study. Internal and external variables will come to play primary role in the determination of a socio-economic profile of these women livelihood. On the other hand, in order to deeply explore and understand immigrant women’s performance in the South Florida ethnic market it is necessary to follow a chronological recount of the Cuban economic enclave and its role as host for immigrant female entrepreneurship and the socio-economic opportunities offered in it.

In the first section, this chapter will identify key socio-economic variables of the subjects under study. These variables will be determined by the analysis of demographic data collected during this study. Categories such as ethnicity, nationality, language proficiency, socio-economic status, gender, age, education, marital status, number of children or dependants, spatial mobility, immigration status, net work relations and social contacts, family structure, and access to financial capital, among others, will be measured and interpreted for farther analysis and understanding of the elements components of
these women’s livelihoods. In the second section of this chapter will be examined the socio-economic characteristics of this specific group of immigrant women and why this make them relevant in the body of studies concerning immigrant women entrepreneurship in South Florida and the United States and their pattern of comparison with other groups elsewhere. The third section of this chapter will address a chronological history of the South Florida Cuban enclave from its formation in the 1960’s through the 2000’s. This recount will rely in sources such as Portes and Stepick (1993), Stepick (1992), Portes and Rumbaut (2001), Pearce (2005). Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick have conducted several studies on immigration in South Florida and its political and socio-economic impact in the transformation of Southern Peninsula from a lay back retiree destination into a major U.S. port for international influx of immigration and economic trade. This section also will explore the role played by ethnic markets; first as facilitators of immigrant women entrance into South Florida labor market; second as a source of income; and third as a possible provider of socio-economic empowerment and well-being in these women livelihoods. The closing section of this chapter will contain conclusions and findings concerning the socio-economic relevance of these immigrant women entrepreneur activities in the South Florida economy. As well as the rationality for the selection of this particular group of women to participate in an in-depth knowledgeable informer interviewer process with the purpose of exploring immigrant female ethnic entrepreneurship in the Unites States. Also this section will explore findings concerning the establishment, development and consolidation of the South Florida Cuban economic enclave.
This dissertation examines the issues of Latin American and Caribbean immigrant women’s insertion into the economy of South Florida through the ethnic market. It explores their rationality for choosing the ethnic market as the portal to enter the local labor market. While presenting a whole socio-economic profile of these women, this case study analyses in deep the set of attributes and constraints faced by them. At the same time, this dissertation investigates the role played by the ethnic market as a modifier of these women’s livelihoods and as an economic body within the local economy. Finally, this research attempts to find out the degree of socio-economic gain experienced by these immigrant women with their entrance into the ethnic market. As well as the sense of empowerment and well being obtained from their incorporation into the ethnic market.

2.2. Socio-economic Variables in Immigrant Women’s Livelihoods

In recent decades, the increasing rate of entrepreneurship among women has become one of the driving forces in the U.S. economy. Although female entrepreneurship is in the rise for women of all ethnic groups, foreign-born women’s presence is remarkable in this trend. Immigrant women’s entrepreneurship in the U.S. has grown at accelerated rate lately. This is as a consequence of the fact that more women than men immigrate to The United States every year. During 2003, for example, 287,958 female immigrants were admitted in the country, in contrast to 219,882 male immigrants (Pearce, 2005). The most recent group of immigrant women entrepreneurs to enter the U.S. is mostly originated from Latin American and the Caribbean region. Mexico is the largest producer of female immigrant influx with a 39.7 percent (Pearce, 2005). The other major Latin America sending countries are El Salvador, Cuba, Colombia, and Brazil.
Immigrant women’s entrepreneurship is rapidly making presence across a large range of sectors of the national economy in every region of the U.S. However, the most popular destinations are Los Angeles, Riverside-Orange County metropolitan area, San Francisco, Chicago, and Miami (Pearce, 2005).

In this first section, a theoretical framework of immigrant women’s profile can be bring into by identifying key variables involved in their everyday lives. How these variables interrelate with each other and with external modifiers such as income generated by their participation in the ethnic market. To examine the participation of this group of immigrant women in the South Florida ethnic market either as wage employees or entrepreneurs, it is of vital importance to understand that immigrant women’s topics cannot be analyzed individually and apart from the socio economic and cultural contexts in which they are immersed (Benería, 2003). The inquires that rise as relevant in the study of these particular group of immigrant women’s economic performance in the ethnic market in South Florida are many, complex, and determined by the cultural and socio-economic conditions in which this women live in South Florida. While economic factors are of primary importance in the analysis of an economic process; in order to categorize external variables such as poverty, socio-economic growth, and labor market opportunities among immigrant women in South Florida, internal factors such as patriarchal family structures, traditions, institutions, and values affecting women’s livelihoods are also key in the understanding of their socio-economic status and subordination. In other words, it is not enough just to study labor market variables to understand immigrant women’s incorporation into the South Florida labor force through the ethnic market; without examine as well other factors such as the limitations
experienced by immigrant women as a result of cultural traditions, gender constrictions, jobs opportunities, immigration status, existent networks and social contacts, and the spatial mobility of these women.

In the United States, the majority of immigrant women start their own businesses in the informal sector after suffering discouraging experiences in the traditional labor market, where they face racial and gender stereotypes, language barriers, and low wages. There are external and internal factors that persuade immigrant women to choose informal venues to enter the labor market. Usually, they are afraid of racial or ethnic discrimination, laborer exploitation or legal punishment in cases of illegality. However, these women’s motivations for choosing the ethnic market can at the same time be influenced by diverse factors contained in their livelihoods (Hondagnu-Sotelo, 2001; Segura, 1984). These factors are socio-economic variables such as ethnicity, nationality, language, socio-economic status, age, gender, education, and marital status; number of children or dependents, spatial mobility, immigration status, networks relations and social contacts; family structure, access to financial capital, and access to labor market, among others. All these variables are dependent one from another, and they are determined by contextual attributes or external condition in the local economy (Sheldon, 1996); as well as immigrant women’s opportunity structures and the degree of access to individual and family assets.

One way to illustrate the interrelationship among the key elements of these immigrant women’s livelihood and external factors is the mutual dependency existent among immigrant women’s degree of spatial mobility, their networks and social contacts and their family framed within a patriarchal structure. The group of women under study
comes from cultures with a rigid patriarchal society where the adult males have the voice and power of decision making within the family circle. Women usually find themselves relegated to a secondary position within the family structure; they perform as child bearings, caregivers, and housekeepers and the production value of their domestic work becomes invisible to the economic process for being consider part of “women’s reproduction task”. Because of the male’s hegemonic role within the family circle, and women’s isolation and home entrapment women’s friends and acquaintances are often limited to be other women and relatives, this brings as a result sex segregated set of job opportunities and job placement (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983, 1986, 1992; Tiano 1986). On the other hand, immigrant women’s primary involvement in domestic work and child care responsibilities at home are a source of economic vulnerability, lack of mobility and autonomy for them; first, because of the creation of a double burden of work for them, at home as an unpaid worker and outside as a wage worker; second, because of the need of flexible work schedules in order to balance domestic responsibilities at home and outside work; third, because of this double burden immigrant women find themselves working as part-time workers without fulltime benefits offered to full time workers (Segura, 1984).

2.3. Socio-economic Profile of the Immigrant Women in The U.S.

When the main elements, internal and external component of these immigrant women’s livelihoods are examined, three variables come to play primary importance in their public and private spheres. Ethnicity, socio-economic status and gender interrelate to each other to produce a “triple oppression” often experienced by immigrant women in the U.S. society (Fernandez-Kelly, 1989; Segura, 1984; Villanueva, 2004). These three
elements contain and determined all the other variables that are part of these women’s livelihood.

In these women public sphere ethnicity and social economic status as well as gender determine their level of education, their spatial mobility, their occupational and residential segregation. In their private spheres gender is a determining element in the family structure and the functions and roles of its members as a patriarchal entity. In the family circle, adult male members are primarily considered the main or solely income providers, therefore the heads of the household with power of decision making over the rest of the members of the family structure. Female members of the family circle are expected to be in charge of childbearing, to be care providers for all family members, and to take care of the household maintenance. Female income generated from outside their home by paid occupations is considered supplementary to the family income. A low rate of full time participation in the labor force for recent immigrant women, combined with their relative high rate of part-time work reflects the attempts of many immigrant women to balance cultural traditions to stay home with the need to contribute to the household income (Ehrenreich & Russell-Hochschild, 2002; Perriette Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996; 2001; Romero, 1992; Segura, 1984). As foreigners and members of an ethnic minority in the U.S. immigrant women find themselves facing racial practices that create stereotypes of their appearance, their families, communities, cultural identities, and spatial locations. When these immigrant women enter in South Florida labor force through the ethnic market they experience occupational segregation either as small entrepreneurs or as low wage employees in a low skill, and low production output economic activity.
In general, because of their ethnicity, prior socio-economic status, low educational level, immigration status, language deficiency, and poor occupational skills these immigrant women are categorized as a low skilled labor force, and an ethnic minority in the new land. These women attempt first, to break cultural and traditional barriers by entering the local labor market. Second, with their entrance into the South Florida labor market they are trying to obtain certain degree of financial independence. This cultural rupture and financial independence becomes a portal for the achievement of a sense of well being, voice and socio-economic empowerment in these women’s livelihood.

The group under study in this research is composed of immigrant women originated from Latin America and the Caribbean regions. As a group they have elements of comparison with immigrant groups elsewhere in the U.S. However, in South Florida, they encounter a very different economy system where the Cuban economic enclave plays a main role in the local economy. Within the Cuban economic enclave setup, the ethnic market plays the role of a fast and relative easy avenue for these women’s entrance into the South Florida labor market. However, it is important to examine first, if the Cuban economic enclave represent a socio-economic advantage for these group of immigrant women at the time of their entrance into the local labor market and during their performance on it. Second, if the working conditions under which these women performed are beneficial to them. Third, if the ethnic market, framed within the Cuban economic enclave, becomes a facilitator of socio-economic independence and long lasting sense of well being and empowerment for these group of immigrant women.
2.4. The Cuban Economic Enclave: a Chronological History

South Florida constitutes a unique socio-economic region\(^1\) where northern tycoons, hucksters, and visionaries of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries found a kind of paradisiacal winter retreat. These early Florida developers experienced an obsession for European architecture and they attempt to turn it into a kind of new found “Mediterranean Riviera.” Where the names and lay out of the communities kept a resemblance to Spanish and Italian cities. Street names such as Granada, Trujillo, Grijalda, Sevilla, and buildings such as the Biltmore Hotel, The Tower of Freedom and the Venetian Pool are among many more examples of analogies to European cities reproduced in South Florida (Portes & Stepick, 1993); Redford, 1970).

By 1950’s, Miami had grown into a safe haven for wealthy northerners and Jewish retirees. Later on, during the 1960’s, Miami was experiencing a socio-economic transformation into a major urban metropolis. The cultural diversity existent in Miami at this point made the city’s social and political order easier to be penetrated by immigration than any other northern city in the United States (Portes & Stepick, 1993). After the Cuban revolution, South Florida started to experience a rapid and dramatic transformation of its population in number and ethnicity. Escaping Castro regime, the first group of political exiles to arrive in South Florida was the island elite. Prior to their departure from Cuba, they had had their properties and land forfeited after failure to attempt to negotiate with the new government. For this particular group of exiles, Miami was not an unknown destination, because of past frequent visits for vacationing and

\(^1\) Portes and Stepick, (1993). Florida never developed a typical U.S. southern socio-economic system. There were never present elements such as one agricultural crop based economy, sharecropping, and a dominant planter social class with alienating rural bosses.
business purposes. Later on the Cuban middle class started to follow their steps and
between January 1959 and April 1961, approximately 135,000 Cuban exiles arrived into
South Florida (Portes & Bash, 1985; Portes & Stepick, 1993).

During the first years of the Cuban revolution, the influx of exiles coming into
South Florida was considered as a political and economic gain for the U.S. and the local
community. Because of their ultra-right political position in a time of the Cold War, and
the human and financial capital they brought alone at their arrival. However, as the
Cuban exiles became more and more a representation of the average island’s population,
they brought alone less human and financial capital, so their socio-economic value in the
new land started to lower as well. During the Kennedy administration, the U.S.
government started to enforce a large scale resettle program for Cuban exiles (Portes &
Stepick, 1993). Immediately after their arrival, anti-Castro refugees were resettled across
the United States, away from Miami. In spite of this immigration measure, by 1978, 40
percent of the Cuban refugees residing in Miami were returnees from others U.S.
locations (Diaz-Briquets & Perez, 1981; Portes & Stepick, 1993). Cuban exiles considered
Miami as a familiar environment where they could find the necessary socio-economic
networks and contacts that will assist them in the establishment of a new business. As a
consequence of this mass return migration, a large exile community emerged in South
Florida. In 1980, the Mariel boat arrived into South Florida bringing along 125,000
refugees. Most of these newcomers settled in the southern peninsula, transforming Miami
into the U.S.’ city with the largest concentrated foreign-born minority (Clark, Lasage, &
2.5. Miami Cuban Enclave Development and Establishment During Early 1960’s

Portes and Stepick in their book *City on the edge: The transformation of Miami* pointed out three key elements in the development and consolidation process of the South Florida’s Cuban enclave. First, the need for a stable market in which small firms have control of cultural defined commodities and services, offered to the immigrant community and not available on the outside. Second, the need for an easy access to a pool of cheap labor, made available through social networks and contacts within the ethnic community. Third, the need to obtain easy and fast access to start-up capital (Portes & Stepick, 1993).

In the 1960’s, the influx of the escapees from the Cuban revolution created in Miami a new available labor market in which northern companies such as the garments industry and Latin American companies took notice of it. Northerners business man saw in Miami labor pool a solution to their northern union conflicts and quickly transferred most of their operations to South Florida. Later on, when small Cuban firms started to appear in the local economy, Latin American investors found in Miami a safe place to conduct business away from economic and political instability that they faced at home. The establishment of international banks and companies with capital flight originated mainly from South America had a positive impact in the development process of the Cuban economic enclave (Botifoll, 1985; Portes & Stepick, 1993).

During its early beginnings, the Cuban economic enclave had to rely on small family loans, small personal savings from wage labor, unpaid or under paid family labor, and micro loans for business start-ups. The existence of networks and social contacts, a common language and culture were essential elements to ensure a successful transition of
the Cuban refugees from political exiles into ethnic entrepreneurs. However, this transition could not be possible without the existence of additional linkages of internal solidarity among Cuban exiles, originated by a common political fate, and an extreme right-wing frame outlook. Family and ethnic obligations worked in the early Cuban entrepreneurs favor, as source of cheap or unpaid labor and easily available startup capital (Portes & Stepick, 1993).

Four decades after of economic struggling, the South Florida Cuban economic enclave had reached a position of socio-economic and political influence in the local community. Cuban exiles in Miami controlled the local political arena; they had reached cultural and linguistic presence, and social and psychological solidarity. The successful consolidation of the Cuban enclave in Miami was possible in part to the way the Cuban exodus occurred. A successive series of waves of escapees brought with them each time a different set of occupational skills, and education inferior to their antecessor. The first group of refugees had easier access to early enclave enterprises and start up capital; the following groups ensured the enclave maintenance and expansion of the economic enclave by providing a growing consumer market for culturally defined goods and Spanish language services that only Cuban firms could provide. At the same time, these later groups of exiles also created a reliable pool of cheap labor. The Cuban economic enclave served these late arrivals with the opportunity of an easy access to a job in which, without English language efficiency, workers have the chance to learn the necessary skills for later on start-up and maintain a business on their on. On the other hand, the Cuban enclave functioned as a paternalistic socio-economic system in which the labor
force felt at easy, protected by counterparts from alien demands and surrounded by a friendly and familiar environment.

By 2006, immigration has transformed Miami from a declining retirement and tourist destination for Northerners into the focal point for socio-economic trade relations with Latin America. Many of its natives, Anglos and African-Americans see Miami as a city where immigrant groups have taken over; some of these immigrants have become highly successful and some are struggling to survive. During the early years of the Cuban Diaspora, the U.S. government issued a welcome policy to the early escapees of the Cuban Revolution at their arrival to South Florida. This initial positive welcome, allowed them to reach a rapid upward mobility in the socio-economic ladder. However, this created ethnic conflicts in Miami, where African Americans and Anglos showed frustration and confusion to the fact that Cuban and other Latin American immigrants could reach socio-economic success without speaking English or been fully assimilated into the American Culture. Another immigrant groups residing in Miami such as Haitians, Mexicans, and Central Americans often felt discriminated against by the U.S. immigration policies issued in their cases (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dum, 2003).

In South Florida, being multilingual is considered a plus point; it is easier to find a job, to shop, or just to get things done (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dum, 2003). Through the years, with every socio-economic or political crisis occurred in Latin America or the Caribbean, the population of South Florida have experienced tangible increasing in number and changes in the conformation of its ethnicity. In the 1990’s Colombians fleeing the violence from the guerrillas and drug-traffic took up residence in Miami. Later, during the same decade, Peruvians and Venezuelans sought refuge in South Florida
from a political and economic turmoil at home. By 2000, Latin Americans had become the largest minority statewide (Viglucci, 1990). The Caribbean as a region has been as well, a significant sender of immigrant influx into South Florida. Besides Bahamians immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century and Haitians refugees since the 70’s, many Jamaicans and Dominicans also claim South Florida as their home.

Immigrant women entrepreneurship in South Florida although it presents some similarities with the rest of female ethnic entrepreneur groups the U.S. has also tremendous differences. The Cuban enclave has served as a sort of economic cushion for the settlement and development of immigrant female entrepreneurship in South Florida. At the same time immigrant women has contributed to the enhancement and maintenance of the ethnic enclave as a source of labor and as a consumer market for the ethnic goods and services produced by the enclave. For the female newcomer, the Cuban economic enclave represents an opportunity to immediate incorporation into the labor market, in most of the cases through informal avenues. The majority of recent female immigrant arrivals to South Florida with low occupational skills enter the local labor market through the service sector, performing in private homes as maids, nannies, and care providers for elders. Female newcomers also end up either as street vendors or as pay or unpaid employees in the shops or business of relatives and friends. In the agricultural sector immigrant women are employed as crop collectors in the rural areas or as plant nursery attendants in the urban areas.

Immigrant women that reside in South Florida consider the ethnic market as a place where they can perform economic activities in order to generate an income. Within the ethnic market’s informal structure immigrant women operate by performing financial
transactions such as trade and retailing of commodities, either as an entrepreneur owning a small business or as a paid employee. More than an economic setting the ethnic markets function as a socialization establishment by providing these women with the opportunity to renew and maintain ethnic relations with counterparts that frequent these places.

The ethnic market also allows immigrant women a more flexible and independent relation in the work place, away from the supervision and demands of bosses and/or relatives. It makes possible for immigrant women with low occupational skills to escape the stigma and servitude of the private home occupations. One of the possible benefits generated by ethnic markets is the opportunity for immigrant women to reach upward labor mobility within the South Florida labor market. Within the informal economic frame of the ethnic market immigrant women may have the opportunity of a business apprenticeship that later will permit them to move on to establish a small business of their own, within the ethnic market structure or as an ethnic entrepreneur in a wider consumer market. This entrepreneurship on time, will take immigrant women to create jobs for themselves as well as for others by hiring employees to work on their own business.

In spite of the numerous possible positive outcomes of immigrant women’s participation in the ethnic market in South Florida, the possible adverse or negative outcomes of this socio-economic interrelationship must be explored as well. The ethnic market can become a state of economic stagnation and social entrapment for immigrant women; first, because of its informal economic structure; second, because of its low output income production; and third, because of its limited reach in the local consumer market. For immigrant women, their ethnic market experience may fall short of providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to start up and maintaining a business of
their own, independent of its size. Issues such as how to obtain legal immigration status in cases of illegality, how to acquire a sales permit, license regulations at city and state levels. How to overcome language and cultural barriers, how to face stereotypes, save enough money for start up capital, and finding the appropriate network system and the appropriate niches in the community. Furthermore, in order to reach a high level of economic success in an entrepreneurship, immigrant women must go beyond the ethnic markets structure and adventure themselves into a wider American consumer market.

In the individual spheres of these immigrant women’s livelihoods, the degree of socio-economic empowerment obtained by their performance in the ethnic market is yet to be measured. With their entrance into the labor market through the ethnic market and the access to a small income, these women may experience a change in their role in the pre-established patriarchal family structure. This change may bring to immigrant women a greater power of decision making and a higher degree of independence from the male family members. However, although the family structure may go through alterations proved to be beneficial to these women; the degree and lasting period of these changes have to be examined in depth. To examine the degree of rupture and change within the patriarchal family structure is necessary to determine the conditions under which these women go day by day, how they relate to others in the work place and at home, what kind of socio-economic links they have established in their community, and their degree of integration and assimilation into the mainstream society. The lasting effects of these changes will determine the real impact that these entrepreneurial activities have in these women’s livelihoods in relation to their private spheres and the community in which they belong.
2.6. Conclusion

The analysis of the socio-economic variables involved in this study allows an understanding of these women’s livelihood configurations. Categories such as ethnicity, nationality, language, socio-economic status, spatial mobility, network relations and social contacts, family structure, age, gender, education, and access to financial capital among others; have a close interrelationship with each other. For example, the spatial mobility, of each of the subjects under study, is determined by the by their age, gender, marital status, number of children, language proficiency, network relations and social contacts. On the other hand, immigrant women’s access to financial capital is usually determined by their socio-economic status, networks and social contacts available to them, their age, their gender and educational level. Each one of these variables plays a key role in the public and private spheres of this specific group of immigrant women and their degree of adjustment and assimilation into the South Florida Community. However, one key variable of these women livelihood to be examined in order to understand their degree of spatial mobility, and therefore the occupational opportunities available to them, is their immigration or legality status at the moment of entering the local labor market through the ethnic market and during their performance on it.

The increasing presence of immigrant women in the ethnic markets in the U.S. implies that a transformation is taking place in the globalized labor market. Remarkable changes in roles and opportunities for women in the U.S. and abroad are noticeable in the presence of female entrepreneurs in non-traditional occupations. However, the majority of women start their entrepreneurship journey in less advantageous positions and with lower skill levels than the male counterparts.
Internal factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, and gender interweave themselves with external factors such as cultural practices, gender constrictions, immigration status, job opportunities, networks, social contacts, and spatial mobility to create constrictions and limitations in these immigrant women’s livelihood configurations.

The influx of people and series of events that throughout the years occurred in the Florida peninsula left their print on it, in different ways and at different time. If the nineteenth-century birth of Miami as a city was due to a matter of personal choice as a winter retreat for wealthy northerners, its twentieth century transformation under the impact of successive influx of migration was without doubt due mainly to political and economic reasons.

Miami was chosen as a main port of immigrant entrance into the U.S. for two reasons: first, its physical proximity with Latin America and the Caribbean either by air or sea routes; and second, because of its socio-economic connections with Latin America and the Caribbean. In the case of the Cuban exodus, because of South Florida’s prior close ties to Cuba, Miami, as its largest metropolitan area, became a major element in Cuban exiles’ Politics (Portes & Stepick, 1993).

The social environment of immigration is modeled, in turn by the history of prior relationships between the country of origin and those of potential destination. People seldom move to totally unfamiliar places; rather, they look for places accessible by prior knowledge of its culture by pre-established social contacts (Portes & Stepick, 1993). Cubans, Haitians, Central Americans, and South Americans came directly to South Florida because they had been previously influenced and socialized toward the U.S.
society. The newcomers saw Florida as a cluster center for ethnic and socio-economic development and a logical choice of entry into the country because of pre-established networks and social contacts by their counterparts.

Depending on the strength of pre-establish social order and the character and voice of the existing migrant community, newcomers may take their place in the ethnic local line, waiting for their turn to move up in the socio-economic ladder; they may remain as outsiders as marginal workers; or they may play a decisive role in the transformation of the social structure and rapid shift of local powers as the case of Miami and the early escapees of the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban socio-economic enclave and its ethnic niches play a major role in Latin American and Caribbean immigrant women’s decision to choose South Florida and in particular Miami as their place of work and residence. The ethnic market fixes into the South Florida economy as a fast avenue to enter the South Florida labor market and a flexible source of income for immigrant women. However, because of the ethnic market informal structure, its low output production, and its narrow reach in the local consumer market, immigrant women may end up in a socio-economic entrapment.

The ethnic market in South Florida may be an important factor in immigrant women economic survival, and at the same time can become an agent of change in these women’s livelihood configurations. An outside from home paid job can bring a sense of self-sufficient for these immigrant women; and at the same time possible gains in autonomy and bargaining power within their family structure.

The proposed research here has patterns of comparison with other immigrant groups elsewhere in the U. S. Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York have experienced
influx of immigrants from different origins at different times. However, in each of these cities newcomers have encountered different settings at their arrival, sometimes worked in their benefit and others against them. Each of these cities has socio-economic niches where immigrants have cluster themselves, establishing ethnic economic enclaves. Los Angeles has been a major port of entrance into the U.S. for Asian, Mexican, and Central Americans; Chicago has have influx of Mexicans which originated the term Chicano a Mexican-American citizen; and New York which have hosted immigrants groups coming from Europe, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

The next chapter, chapter III, will describe the sources of data to be examined in this study, it will explain the methods used to conduct the research, and also it will present the plan of analysis for this study, taking as baseline ground theories of International Political Economy, Gender, and Development. Chapter III will explore in detail archival data and focus groups as research methods used to collect initial information about immigrant women involved in ethnic markets and specifically immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village. Finally, participant observation and in-depth interviewing will be examined as ethnographic techniques used to carry out the field research.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

Chapter III presents first, a justification for this research project on immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village. Conceptual frameworks drawn from theories of International Political Economy, Gender studies, and Development studies orient the exploration of the socioeconomic relationships between immigrant women and The Redland Harvest Market Village explored in this study. Second, the chapter sets out the main research questions and a series of related subsidiary questions that guide this research project. Third, it explains and justifies the case study methodology employed in this dissertation. Chapter III also reviews the ethnographic methodological techniques employed to gather the needed data for the case study. Fourth, the data sources for the study and focus groups used to collect initial information about immigrant women involved in ethnic markets are described. Fifth and finally, the participant observation and in-depth interviewing ethnographic techniques invoked to carry out the field research presented in this project are examined.

There are three fundamental components or variables that determine or strongly shape immigrant women livelihoods in South Florida ethnic markets as they do elsewhere in the U.S. *ethnicity, class and gender*, these variables interrelate with each other to produce what many authors refer to as a *triple oppression* faced by immigrant women in
Ethnicity is one of the main barriers immigrant women must conquer in the United States. They have to struggle with an outsider stereotype imposed on them by their physical appearance, language, and foreign cultural traditions and values. When referring to social class, most of immigrant women come from lower class backgrounds which afford limited access to education, working skills, and financial capital. Gender is one of the major barriers as immigrant women from low developed countries experience constraints in private and public spheres. First the patriarchal family structure restricts female members to very limited roles as wife, mother and homemaker allowing very little room for decision making, and sense of well-being. At the same time women are expected to combine their productive role outside their home with their reproductive and domestic responsibilities within their households (Leonard, 1998). Second, in a gendered mode of production, women are consider source of cheap labor and low productivity due to their limited spatial mobility and their need of a flexible work schedule in order to deal with the double burden of domestic responsibilities at home and an outside paying job.

This study was born out of an initial desire to understand the reasons behind the growing concentration of immigrant women in what has been called ethnic entrepreneurship in the U. S. economy (Pearce, 2005). The study is driven by a particular interest in the economic and political implications of this phenomenon, in the women involved, and in labor market policies that either encourage or discourage ethnic entrepreneurship. Ultimately, this study attempts to establish patterns of comparison and a setting scenario for the testing of the impact of the socio-economic variables of
ethnicity, class, and gender upon immigrant women’s livelihoods participating in the South Florida ethnic market.

**3.2. Why Study Immigrant Women’s Roles in Ethnic Markets of South Florida**

The current literature on immigrant issues emergent in The United States highlights the existence of female immigrant entrepreneurship throughout North America, and in particular, in areas of immigrant concentration. In South Florida the Cuban economic enclave provides the right conditions for the expansions of such activities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Preliminary information gathered during the organizational stage of this dissertation revealed the existence of large ethnic markets in South Florida. The characteristics of these markets have remained virtually unexplored despite their importance to South Florida and their links to the global economic system. (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dum, 2003). In addition, since a larger majority of the workers participating in these markets seemed to be immigrant women, the choice of the ethnic market as the focus of this study provided an opportunity to examine the impact of ethnic economic activities upon the lives of immigrant women and how class, gender and ethnicity are articulated in concrete working and living conditions.

Three main elements come to have relevance from the body of literature revised early.

- Do immigrant women use the *Redland Harvest Market Village* as an instrument of socio-economic upper mobility in South Dade County (Florida)?
- Do studies on immigrant issues that have been done elsewhere reproduce themselves in South Florida?
• What role does the Cuban socio-economic enclave play in the South Florida ethnic market?

• Why is relevant of earlier studies that are reproduced in this case study?

South Florida and the city of Miami, with its large ethnic economic enclave located in a highly industrialized country, afforded the opportunity to explore the dynamics of the global labor market within the specific context of the ethnic market. During the fieldwork process, it quickly became apparent that location of the ethnic market within the larger economy was crucial in coming to terms with its function in relation to other productive levels and the kind of labor market dynamics that these complex interactions generated.

The sample population for this case study was selected from *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. Out of a total of 340 individual “stands” or micro-businesses, a small sample group comprised of 36 women, working there either as employers or employees were chosen to participate in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. This sample group represented 10.6% of this ethnic market’s total population. These women had migrated from various Latin American and Caribbean countries in which the majority of them belong to the working class. Traditionally, each of these women’s view of the world enhances her role as wife and mother.

The ethnic market, a portion of the South Florida informal economy in need of cheap labor, gives these immigrant women the option of either starting an entrepreneurial venture as an owner of a small stand in the market or to hold a paying job as an employee. In exchange, these women make use of the limited skills they have acquired during the performance of their domestic obligations at home and/or through prior work
These women combine their domestic skills in food preparation and garment sewing, or agricultural basic knowledge with rudimentary trading and retailing strategies to earn an income. Within the ethnic market, these women cater to the needs of their counterparts who frequent these kinds of establishments. In the market they sell harvest products and garments, ethnic music, small pets and pet supplies, jewelry and a number of other ethnic products. They also prepared and sell ethnic foods.

3.3. Theoretical Approaches: Principle Theories

The use of an interdisciplinary approach is essential to comprehensively examine all of the dimensions involved in the immigrant women’s insertion into ethnic markets of the U.S. and South Florida economies in an era of globalization. Three main paradigms make major contributions in this case study: International Political Economy, Development, and Gender. International Political Economy, studying the interplay of economics and politics in the international scenario, is critical in understanding the immigration and adaptation problem (Frieden, Lake, & Broz, 2003), the dynamics of interaction and development of the labor market, and how the market is influenced by politics. International Political Economy is one theoretical framework that provides a feasible explanation of the complex phenomenon of immigration. It answers economic questions sensible to political policies, such as the legal status of the immigrant women participating in the ethnic market. International Political Economy is relevant to the understanding of globalization of the world’s economy and to the dynamics of supply and demand of the immigrant labor force in the international labor market. These theories also contribute to the understanding of the concepts of economic niches and ethnic
enclaves as elements of socioeconomic segregation within a particular territorial configuration such as South Florida.

Development, as cultural and socioeconomic conditions in which women are immersed across countries and regions (Benería, 2003; Boserup, 1970; Portes & Stepick, 1993), allows the examination of issues such as immigration, globalization, and neoliberalism. It also helps point out ways the effects of the globalization experienced by women differ from the ones experienced by men. On the other hand, disciplines such as Gender and Development can be implemented in the analysis of variables such as family structure, social structure, ethnicity, cultural constrictions, labor market dynamics, division of labor, and economic structure.

In the past most studies of immigrant adaptation in the U.S. have been conducted from an androcentric point of view, in which the phenomenon of immigration was always conceptualized as a “man’s” issue; where men and women were always viewed just a mass of individuals, disregarding completely the gender components of this dynamic process (Barritteau, 1992). International Political Economy, Gender, and Development are key theoretical paradigms in the analysis of the ethnic market as either an instrument of female immigrant labor force oppression, exploitation, and subordination (Tiano, 1986) or a way for immigrant women to archive economic independence, individual and social empowerment, agency to modify gendered conditions, and sense of well-being.

Following the lead of these theoretical debates, examine ethnic market structure and its dynamic process, as well as the impact that it has had in the livelihoods of immigrant women participating in these markets, it was necessary:
1. To come to terms with the conceptualization of the immigrant woman as an individual and her socio-economic status in the United States; the ethnic, cultural, educational, and financial barriers that immigrant women face in South Florida; as well as gender constrictions imposed to them by patriarchal family structures. A triple oppression of ethnicity, class and gender (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Segura, 1984; Villanueva, 2002).

2. To divide the problem into two separate but interrelated stages: first an international stage (Latin America and the Caribbean) and second a domestic stage (the United States).

3. To explore the dynamics of the U.S. labor market and how immigrant women fit into it; the conceptualization of immigrant women as a source of cheap labor in a globalized economy (Benería, 2003; Fernandez-Kelly & Garcia, 1986).

4. To examine the invisible production value of women’s domestic work seen as part of their reproductive role (Boserup, 1970).

5. To examine ethnic markets as an informal entrepreneurial manifestation of immigrant groups within the U.S. economy.

Immigrant women’s possible gains with their participation in entrepreneurial activities promote issues of gender equality at all levels of the society need to be examined through theories of Development and Gender. The concepts of thesis of integration, thesis of marginalization, and thesis of exploitation have been used in the analysis of elements such as women participation in the work force and the degree of rupture of patriarchal and traditional family structures (Benería, 2003; Tiano, 1986). The
impact of immigrant women’s participation in the ethnic market can be measured by the changes experienced in their livelihoods at the private and public levels. Female subordination and isolation from both production processes and political spheres, and also the conceptualization of immigrant women as a source of cheap labor, are often contradictory aspects of immigrant women’s participation in the process of industrialization (Benería, 2003; Tiano, 1986). There is a need for analysis of women’s agency, of changing gender identities and women’s capacity to contest oppressive practices at work or in their private lives after entering the labor force or to engage themselves in entrepreneurial activities. Agency stands for the people’s ability by which choices are made and act upon them in ways that challenge power relations. (Kabeer, 2005) Therefore, Agency represents a main element in the establishing of empowerment and well being because implies not only decision making and other forms of observable action but also the meaning, motivation, purpose that individuals bring on their actions. The process of empowerment can be explored and measured through the interrelation of agency, resources or capabilities, and achievements or functionings in these women livelihoods. Agency, capabilities, and functionings need to be correlated with concepts of cultural norms and traditions and patriarchal family structure (Benería, 2003; Segura, 1984) as well as gender constrictions in women’s livelihoods (Benería, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996, 2001; Segura, 1984).

International Political Economy and the theories of Marxism are a base line in the analysis of the production value of women’s domestic work and the invisibility of their work product. Women’s work at home has always been considered a continuation of their reproductive role as mother, wife, and housekeeper. Once women engage themselves in
paid work they try to balance domestic obligations at home with an outside job, placing
them at disadvantage and in a vulnerable position. Immigrant women find themselves
forced to accept poor working conditions and low wage occupations in exchange for
flexible working schedules. In the dynamics of the international labor market, female
immigrant labor is conceptualized as a producer of low surplus value because of diverse
socioeconomic variables that play a constricting role in their opportunity structure. In
South Florida, immigrant women face personal constraints such as level of education,
language deficiency, age, marital status, immigrant status, (illegality) and number of
children. Immigrant women also play against contextual attributes such as spatial
mobility, gendered contacts networks, governmental immigrant policies, and labor
market supply and demand for immigrant female labor.

The ethnic market represents for these immigrant women a relatively easy path to
enter the local labor market and at the same time a fast source of income. Because of its
informal economic structure, ethnic markets also allow immigrant women with low
training skills to enter the labor market, earn an income, and detour from the stigma of
private domestic jobs. However, the possible benefits enjoyed immigrant women
resulting from their participation in ethnic markets in terms of issues of gender equality at
their private and public spheres needs to be explored. The ultimate payback of immigrant
women’s participation in ethnic market’s economic activities should be measured through
long and lasting changes archived in their livelihood configurations. These changes must
include the recognition of immigrant female socio-economic and political rights, the
rupture of patriarchal constraints, individual and social decision power, economic
independence, and gender equality.
In South Florida, the conditions existent in the labor market have been determined by global and local economic restructuring, neo-liberal policies, and the globalization of production experienced by both high and low income countries since the 1960’s. Sociopolitical elements have played a primary role in the dynamics of migrant movements into South Florida and its social configuration. In an effort to understand the tendencies of the local labor market toward informality and the increasing social inequalities, it is necessary to analyze the gender, economic, and political dimensions of the globalization process and the migrant phenomenon.

3.4. Key Questions of the Case Study

Out of the problem justification presented early in this chapter and the theoretical approaches of International Political Economy, Development studies and Gender studies as well as variables of class gender and ethnicity engaged in the exploration emerged key questions that this dissertation seeks to answer.

1. Do immigrant women improve their socio-economic status via incorporation into the South Florida ethnic market?

2. Do immigrant women increase their sense of “empowerment” and “well-being” via incorporation into the South Florida ethnic market?

A series of subsidiary questions that flow from these initial questions include.

1. Under what conditions do women participate in the ethnic markets?

2. What factors influence the degree of spatial and economic mobility and the socio-economic opportunities available to immigrant women in South Florida?
3. What are the major personal constraints faced by immigrant women in South Florida?

4. Do the South Florida ethnic enclave and economic niches constrain the economic mobility of immigrant women?

5. Do networks play a key role in their selection of South Florida for settlement in the new land?

6. What strategies do immigrant women employ given the constraints and opportunities faced in the labor market?

7. Does the ethnic market cause isolation and economic entrapment for immigrant women, keeping them outside the mainstream economy? Or, is the ethnic market a kinder alternative, providing a more viable route to upward economic mobility and social and economical hierarchal empowerment for immigrant women?

8. Is the ethnic market an instrument of exploitation and subordination for immigrant women? Why or Why not?

9. Does the entrance of immigrant women into the labor market instill change in any way the structure of the patriarchal family?

10. Does the participation of immigrant women in the ethnic market provide them with socioeconomic emancipation, agency and voice?

11. Are ethnic markets just a manifestation of economic functionalism bringing economic growth for the local economy but failing to provide socio-economic empowerment and wellbeing in immigrant women’s life?
3.5. Methodology: Case Study

Case study is a research strategy, a qualitative research that is able to satisfy the three tenets of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining (Yin, 1989). Case studies can be single or multiple-case designs. In both instances, either single-case design or multiple-case design, the generalization of results is made to theory rather than to populations. In social sciences studies, the case studies findings have gone beyond the quantitative statistical results. They explain the conditions through the perspective of the actors. Thus case study evaluations can cover both process and outcomes, because they include both quantitative and qualitative data (Yin, 1989).

Case studies are multi-perspective analysis. In addition to consider the voice and perspective of the subjects, case study considers the relevance and interaction among them (Yin, 1989). This is the rationality for the selection of the case study as the methodology of this study, which focus is in the degree of empowerment, agency, voice and lasting sense of well-being gained by immigrant women with their participation in the ethnic market.

According to Yin (Yin, 1989), there are five components of the research design that are imperative for case studies methodology: a study’s questions; a study’s propositions; a study’s unit of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings. In this study, there are two main questions to be answered: 1) Do immigrant women improve their socio-economic status via incorporation into the ethnic market? 2) Do immigrant women increase their sense of “empowerment” and “well-being” via incorporation into the ethnic market? In this research, these main questions are assisted by a series of additional inquires called
subsidiary questions as presented early in this chapter. These main questions as well as the additional inquires will be addressed through the application of the ethnographic method as a methodological approach, and the use of archival data sources, methodological techniques such as focus groups, participant observation, and in-depth interviews.

This study’s propositions are generated or derived from the main questions. These propositions are great helpers in focusing the research goals and the purpose of the study. There are three main propositions in this research:

1. The invisible production value of immigrant women’s economic activities as a result of being considered an extension of their reproduction and domestic tasks;

2. The feminization of the global labor market with its increasing demand for female labor force, where immigrant women are considered as a source of cheap labor. The changing profile of immigrant women from mere passive companions of male immigrants to autonomous individuals, migrating on their own initiative;

3. The ethnic market as an economic agent of change in the lives of immigrant women participating on it.

The unit of analysis of this case study is a specific group of immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village. Due to the small size of the sample used in this case study, the group of immigrant women selected for this studying is not in any way representative of the whole South Florida’s immigrant female population. The rationality for the selection of this group of immigrant women was due to geographic and
cultural reasons, the easy access to *The Redland Harvest Market Village* location, and the considerable high degree of availability and cooperation of these women. Geographically, South Florida is a major port of entry for immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean; Miami is a socio-economic cluster for a great variety of ethnic entrepreneurial niches, as well as setting of international economic trade. In South Florida Latin and Caribbean cultures cross paths neither as a “melting pot” nor as a social mosaic, where all parts of the puzzle fit together and totally assimilate into the main stream society, but more as a society with high levels of cultural permeability allowing for an existence of foreign customs and traditions without complete assimilation into the main stream society.

In the final stage of this study, the data is linked to propositions and criteria through an analyzing process. The attempt of this study is not to generate results that can be applied to the immigrant women’s experience in the U.S., rather it is to generate a theoretical framework that can identify the key aspects in the socioeconomic interrelationship among immigrant women and ethnic markets. By generating such a framework, identifying key variables, and looking for relationships between these variables, ways for retesting and refining these results in a variety of settings can begin to be formulated by additional studies in the U.S. or elsewhere.

### 3.6. Methodological Approach: The Ethnographic Method

Ethnography literally means “a portrait of a people.” Ethnography is a written description of a particular culture; the customs, beliefs, and behavior based on information collected through fieldwork (Harris & Johnson, 2000). Ethnography is the art
and science of describing a group or culture. The description may be of small tribal groups (Harris & Johnson, 2000). The ethnography method relies mainly on close, personal experience and possible participation of the researcher.

The rationality for the selection of the ethnographic method as a methodological approach in this study followed the fact that the focus of this research, participation of immigrant women in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, is a socio economic phenomenon that involves a small group of people who are immersed in a globalize system influenced by cultural and political constraints. In this case study, the ethnographic method process contained three main stages. First, an initial stage involving the selection of the population under research, a review of the literature pertaining to the population under study, and the identification of the variables of interest. Second, it involved a middle stage requiring a physical and active immersion into the study setting in order to gather data in the form of observational transcripts and in-depth interviews. This direct participation allowed access to the well-known networks and social contacts and established a certain degree of trust and familiarity between the researcher and the population examined. Third, a final stage which involved the analysis of the data collected and theory development.

The main goal of the ethnographic method used in this study is to understand immigrant women interactions with the culture in which they partake. The key goal is identification of the dynamics of routine practices, problems, and possibilities for further development within the study’s setting. The majority of the data produced in this ethnographic study was elicited through the process of participant observation and in-depth interviews. Thus the findings and results are largely qualitative.
According to M. Hammersley (Hammersley, 1990), there are three principles in conducting the ethnographic method. First naturalism, a view in which the researcher’s aim is to capture the character of naturally occurring human behavior; conceptually this natural state can only be obtained through first-hand contact. The researcher must minimize her or his effects on the behavior of the sample being studied. The goal is to increase the chances that what is discovered from the natural setting can be related to other similar settings that have or have not been studied. The notion of naturalism implies that social events and processes must be explained in terms of their relationship to the context in which they occur. Second, understanding that human actions differ from the behavior of physical objects and other animals; they are complex responses that involve interpretation and stimuli. If we wish to be able to explain human actions effectively we must gain an understanding of the cultural perspectives on which they are based (Hammersley, 1990). Ethnic, occupational, and small informal groups develop distinctive ways of relating to the world that need to be understood if their behavior is to be explained. Therefore, it is necessary to learn the culture of the group under study before producing valid explanations for the behavior of its members. Thirdly discovery, which is the research process, must be considered inductive or discovery-based rather than limited to the testing of explicit hypotheses. The research findings should be regarded a valuable outcome of, not a precondition for, research.

In this study the ethnographic method seen as a social research technique included the following steps:
1. Immigrant women’s entrepreneur activities in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* were studied in their everyday contexts rather than under experimental conditions created by the researcher.

2. The data was gathered from a range of sources (archival and focus groups), however participant observation and in-depth interviewing were used as the main methodological techniques.

3. The approach to data collection was flexible in the sense that it did not involve a process of following a detailed plan set at the beginning of the research. The initial data collected through focus groups served as the raw form of knowledge on a wide front feasible and as base line information for further exploration within the research.

4. The focus of this study was one instance of a South Florida ethnic market, and a single group of immigrant women participating in an ethnic market.

5. The analysis of the data involved, interpreting of the meanings, and functions of this group of women’s actions which primarily took the form of verbal descriptions and explanations while quantification and statistical analysis played a subordinate role at most.

### 3.7. Archival Data

How can the pre-established theoretical framework be applied to establish points of contrast and find patterns of comparison, in migration movements and labor market dynamics, between the case study presented in this dissertation and similar ones
Archival data is used in this case study as an initial stage of analysis for exploring the research problem examined here and additionally as an auxiliary and complementary research source. All observations, texts, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and available statistical data were used as a basis for the formulation of a conceptual background. Establishing patterns of comparison among the national and international immigrant female entrepreneurship experience and the population under examination in this case study required reliance on previous analysis and statistical data drawn from them. Relevant studies such as the ones conducted in the export-oriented zones of the South East Asian female labor market (Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Lim, 1997), including the several analyses of the Maquiladoras model of mass production in the U.S. - Mexican border (Cravey, 1998; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Fernandez-Kelly & Garcia, 1986; Fernandez-Kelly & Sassen, 1992; Fussell, 2000), have had an impact on the formulation of a theoretical framework of the female labor force experience world wide. Globalization studies (Beneria, 2003; Hondagnu-Sotelo, 1996; 2001; Tiano, 1986; Segura, 1984) had shed light on the dynamics of female migrant movement from peripheral countries to the core, as well as ethnic entrepreneurship in the industrialized countries.

The exploration of all these previous studies allowed for the establishment of patterns of comparison among diverse cases, and the formulation of a common inquiry into the real gains and benefits that economic development and globalization have brought into women’s livelihoods associated with their incorporation into the labor market. These studies examined the trajectory of female labor participation within formal and informal settings, as well as the different effects economic development has had in
women’s livelihoods at different locations. Dollar, Gatti, and Lim (Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Lim, 1997) have explored the effects of export-oriented, labor intense manufacturing in South East Asia. They pointed out that women engaged in this kind of work have experienced certain gains in financial autonomy and decision making power. However, these benefits, although they are significant in women’s livelihoods, lock a long lasting effect of empowerment and impart real value in fighting a gendered mode of production.

In the U.S. Mexican border Fernandez –Kelly, Cravey, and Fussell (Cravey, 1998; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Fernandez-Kelly & Garcia, 1986; Fernandez-Kelly & Sassen, 1992; Fussell, 2000) brought out the pitfalls of the maquiladora model of low cost manufacturing. Women who have participated in these economic models have not experienced substantial benefits to their livelihood configurations. The maquiladora model has turn into a socio-economic entrapment system, where women are forced to accept unfavorable working conditions and low wages, without opportunities to ascend the corporate ladder.

Previous studies afford the examination of women’s perspective in different socio economic contexts and their role in the production process. Through these studies, the diverse stages of economic development in both rural and urban settings and the differential bearing that economic development has had in women and men can be visualized.

3.8. Focus Groups as Initial Contact

Focus groups are used in this study as a methodological instrument to establish an initial contact with immigrant women, either as employers or employees, involved in The
Redland Harvest Market Village. Focus Group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of individuals is selected and assembled by the researcher to discuss and comment on personally experienced issues directed related to the topic that is the subject of the research (Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley, 1990; Yin, 1989). Focus groups rely on interaction within the group based on the discussion of the topics that are supplied by the researcher. Hence the key characteristic which distinguishes focus groups is the insight data produced by the interaction between participants (Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley, 1990; Yin, 1989). The use of focus groups allowed for the initial access to the group of women and site selected for this study, an initial inventory or sampling of the group and the site, and the rise of new issues for exploration. During the occurrence of focus group dynamics, the participants selected remained within their natural setting. The participants’ body language and facial expressions were observed in detail in order to try to further interpret their reactions and opinions. The main reason for the selection of focus groups as one of the qualitative research techniques used in this study was to draw upon respondents’ attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions in relation to the subject of study. These attitudes and feelings are more likely to be revealed through the social gathering and the interaction which a focus group entails. In contrast to individual interviews, which aim to obtain only an individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and feelings, focus groups bring out a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context. Supported on a pre-established interview guide, the focus groups allowed for the obtaining of a large amount of information in a short period of time. However, the data gathered from the interaction between researcher and participants during the focus groups was limited to the degree of generalization allowed by the findings.
In this case study, focus groups were used in the preliminary or exploratory stage of the research and complemented the participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Focus groups were used as a research instrument which helped initiate contact with the group of immigrant women under study. At the same time, it assisted the generation of a hypotheses and the later development of questions and concepts used in the questionnaire and interview guidelines (Yin, 1994a; 1994b).

The interaction created during focus groups allowed preliminary conclusions about these women’s perceptions of their status as immigrants in the United States to be drawn. They expressed their opinion, values, and beliefs about their individual situations. In this initial stage of the research, key issues emerged to be explored later in the study (Fetteman, 1998; Hammersley, 1990; Yin, 1989). These women had common opinions and a similar understanding of their experience in the immigrant labor force, which brought about multiple questions and explanations of their behavior and attitudes toward the society in which they were immersed. From a psychological point of view, these women, as participants of focus groups dynamics, experienced a sense of empowerment related to the opportunity to expressing their feelings and opinions about their role as immigrant labor force in U.S. society and as members of a community and family structure. The involvement in the research process and having their opinion valued by the researcher gave these women a sense of voice, empowerment and an emancipation rarely or never experienced by them before.

Although focus groups are a great research tool, there were some limitations that must be considered when analyzing the obtained data. There was less control over the data produced compared with either quantitative studies or one to one interviewing
(Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley, 1990; Yin, 1989). Free communication, exchanging opinions and doubts among the participants had to be allowed, leaving little space for controlling the participants discourse. Therefore, the data obtained may be too general and superficial which could in turn make it difficult to analyze and draw conclusions. The opinion or view of a focus group participant may be influenced or determined by the remaining members of the group, therefore it may be difficult to clearly identify the participant’s view. Focus groups as a research tool can become difficult to assemble due to the many elements that have to be present in its dynamics. The group discussion of personal views may require a certain level of trust among the participants. Therefore in this particular research, personal in-depth interviews and participant observation were used alongside focus groups to ensure the reliability and validity of the data obtained.

The selection of the participants for these focus groups was not easy, due to the need to identify participants that formed both a heterogeneous and a homogenous group. It needed to be a heterogeneous group (different origins such as South American, Central American, and Caribbean, different skill levels and different educational levels) in order to generate interaction in which diverse opinions and experiences can be revealed. At the same time, the group should be homogenous so that participants feel comfortable with each other, because of similar characteristics of gender, class, and occupation. The selection of the participants was undertaken by the researcher directly by personally approaching women working at The Redland Harvest Market Village. A precise and clear explanation of the purpose of this research and the dynamics of the focus groups was provided by the researcher for the participants at this initial stage of the study. When
human subjects are selected and involved in a research study, full information about the uses of the participants’ contributions must be given.

During the focus groups sections it was necessary to promote debate among the participants by asking questions in reference to the study’s topic in order to challenge them. It was also imperative to keep the discussion focused on the key issues of the study, but at the same time ensure that everyone participated in the discussion and got a chance to speak. It is better to keep it simple, asking general questions about the immigrant issue, leaving the more sensitive and personal questions for the in-depth interview stage.

3.9. Participant Observation

Participant observation as a research method involves a commitment to get close to the subject being observed in its natural setting. It also requires the researcher to be factual and descriptive in reporting what is observed, and to find out the points of view of participants in the domain observed (Spradley, 1990). During participant observation the researcher needs to make the decision to what degree he or she needs to be active as a participant in the activities being explored. The extent of participation is a continuum which varies from complete immersion in the field as full participant to complete separation from the activities observed, when taking a role of spectator (Patton, 1987).

Visual observation is not the only way to gather data in ethnographic studies. For an in-depth understanding of the user culture, the researcher should watch, participate in, and inquire about the users’ normal activities. The researcher should be immersed in the culture in order to better understand what is going on around them (Massey, 1998).
Participant observation simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection (Yin, 1989). During the process of participant observation the researcher shares in the life and activities of the people in the observed setting. The purpose of such participation is to develop an insider’s view of what is happening. The researcher not only sees what is happening but “feels” what it is like to be part of the group under study. The challenge of this research method is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the experience as an insider while describing the experience for outsiders.

In this study, participant observation was used as an auxiliary methodological technique, along with focus groups and in-depth interviewing. The observation of the socio-economic interaction occurring in this ethnic market was carried on during numerous visits to the site. At times, the degree of participation was limited to a direct observation of the daily activities performed in The Redland Harvest Market Village by the group of immigrant women selected as the sample subject for this research. The contact established was initially a seller-buyer exchange. It then evolved into visual observations, and informal conversations between researcher and interviewee. In spite of the low level of direct physical participation in the market’s retail activities, by the end of the study, a knowledge and sense of internalization was obtained of the socio economic market experience happening at The Redland Harvest Market Village.
3.10. In-Depth Interviews

Interviewing is a face of ethnographic research that requires a full understanding of the particular issue to be examined, the needs of the interviewee, and the personal style of the interviewer. These elements have to come together to create a unique situation for each interview (Krueger, 1994). One of the most important elements of an interviewing process is to remain centered on the purpose of the research. Throughout the interview dynamics the researcher must maintain control over the discussion without leaving an opportunity for wandering or side tracking outside the focus of the study (Yin, 1989). The fundamental principle of in-depth interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own opinions in their own terms. Therefore it is necessary to design how a sequence of different kinds of questions can be most appropriately arranged during the interview, including past, present, and future tense questions (Patton, 1987).

In this study, the interviewer posed truly open-ended questions, giving the respondents the opportunity to reminiscence on their personal experiences as immigrants. It was very important to formulate clear questions which were easy to understand, with a language level appropriate for the situation. The interviewer asked one question at a time, using follow-up questions to obtain depth and detail in the responses. During this interviewing process it was necessary that the questions communicate clearly what information was desired. Also, it was important to let the interviewee know why the information to be obtained was important for the research. The establishment of a personal rapport and sense of mutual interest between the interviewer and the respondents formed a base line to insure a sense of trust and the reliability and accuracy of the data
collected. Neutrality was maintained toward the specific content of the responses. Here it was necessary to have a close observation of the effect the inquiries had on the interviewee and the responses to the different questions. The interviewer was aware of and sensitive to the feelings of the respondents. One of the most important guidelines of the process of interviewing in this study was to treat the person interviewed with absolute respect; the researcher had to keep in mind that it was a privilege and a responsibility to examine another person’s experience.

Through the use of in-depth interviewing as a methodological instrument, it was possible to gather different kinds of information, necessary when exploring and analyzing specific issues formulated in this study. The questionnaire applied in this study was a collection of demographic questions referring to personal data and a group of open-end questions, short answer questions, and a series of open-end questions. In the demographic questions the interviewee responded to inquiries such as date of birth, marital status, place of birth, and so on. The short answer questions referred to chronological events and work trajectory. The open-ended questions allowed the examination of issues that required a detailed reminiscence and reflection on the interviewee’s own reality and experience as an immigrant. Here were formulated questions covering reasons for leaving the birth country; why U.S. and South Florida was the choice of residence; and the degree of assimilation into the host culture. The answers to the questions produced behavioral data on personal opinions, feelings, and beliefs of the respondents. The in-depth interviewing process conducted in this study produced background information and sensory data necessary to obtain findings and draw conclusions in this case study.
3.11. Conclusion

The rationality for the selection of *The Redland Harvest Market Village* as the setting and the women participating in it as the population sample for this study is due to geographic, cultural, and socio economic reasons, as well as the availability of these women and the site location.

Several alternative approaches have contributed to the analysis of globalization, immigration, and the dynamics of supply and demand in the international labor market. However, in the exploration of the socio-economic interrelationship of the immigrant female labor force and ethnic market, it is necessary to use an interdisciplinary approach in which the main paradigms to interplay are International Political Economy, Gender, and Development.

International Political Economy allowed for the exploration of the dynamics of the international interrelation of economics and politics. It explained supply and demand in the international labor force market, production and distribution of goods, and the struggle for a balance of power among high and low industrialized countries. Through the lens of International Political Economy it was possible to examine the role of the immigrant female labor force in a globalized economy as well as the immigration movement from low to high industrialized countries.

Throughout the Development approach it was possible to examine the cultural and socioeconomic conditions in which these women are immersed across countries and regions. The approaches of integration, marginalization, and exploitation are key concepts in the analysis of the impact of ethnic market participation in immigrant women’s livelihoods in relation to the society in which they partake.
Gender as an analysis paradigm in this study allowed for the exploration of the effects that the participation in ethnic markets have in these immigrant women’s livelihoods at private and public levels. Most importantly, the gender approach facilitates the measurement of the degree of rupture from the patriarchal family structure, financial independency, and decision making empowerment that these women experienced upon their entrance into the labor market via the ethnic market.

In order to answer the main inquires post by this research it is necessary to examine at deep the concepts of empowerment and well being. These principles can be measured in direct correlation with the dimensions of agency, resources or capabilities, and achievements or functionings.

This empirical case study may not be representative of the South Florida female immigrant labor force participating in ethnic markets due to the size of the population sample selected. However, the main goal of this research is to initiate a process that will contribute to and allow for the development of a theory of immigrant women’ socio-economic experience in ethnic markets.

The ethnographic method as methodological approach of this research allowed a first-hand exploration of this group of women’s everyday work experience, as participant observer of their natural environment and as interviewer inquiring about personal information and their socio-economic experience.

Focus groups facilitated an initial contact with immigrant women working in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* in Miami, South Dade County. Focus groups were used as a way to “break the ice” and gather first hand information through the women’s
opinions about their life experiences as part of the immigrant labor force in South Florida.

The findings and conclusions of this research can be retested and redefined in varying contexts. Ideally the results will be generalized not from the sample to the population, but from the sample to the theoretical framework. That framework can be applied to other settings and refined in order to allow generalizations from the theory to the wider population.

This research design will attempt to solve the puzzle that the problem presents and answer key questions about immigrant women upper mobility and empowerment, agency and sense of well being within The Redland Harvest Market Village and the South Florida local community; and compare the obtained results with the other findings of studies done elsewhere in the U.S.

In the next chapter the group of immigrant women selected as the population sample for this study will be introduced in detail. The data collected with the help of focus groups, participant observation and in-depth interviewing, on immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village will be laid out in detailed tables and figures. This will allow the identification of socio-economic variables to be analyzed and revealed later in patterns of comparison between this case study and similar studies elsewhere.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED

4.1. Overview

Chapter IV provides an introductory overview of the subject population and the setting of this case study. The social class background of the female immigrant participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village is explored, as well as their ethnicity, economic status, and family structure. This chapter sets the stage for the analysis in this dissertation by presenting the data collected. The main objective of this chapter is to describe rather than analyze. Information on immigrant women participating in this ethnic market was gathered through the use of methodological techniques such as focus groups, participant observation, and in-depth knowledgeable inform interviews. This data includes these women’s demographic information and their own opinions of their role as an immigrant labor force in the U. S. The data also measures the socio-economic impact of their participation in The Redland Harvest Market Village and the changes that affect their livelihood concerning private and public spheres.

To draw a socioeconomic profile of immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village, it is necessary to take into account these women’s real life situations as an integrated whole, where multiple relations of domination and subordination based on ethnicity, age, race, and nationality interact dialectically with
class and gender relations. The data presented in the next figures reflects the main elements that are components of these women’s make-up.

4.2. Socio Economic Profile of 36 Immigrant Women Participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village

4.2.1. Age: Their ages range from 14 years to 79 years. The mean age is 36. 60%; the majority of these women are in the active years (22-46 years of age).

4.2.2. Educational Level: 11 (30 %) of the women interviewed attended elementary school, 17 (47 %) attended secondary education, and 8 (22 %) were involved in college education.

4.2.3. Income: 20 (56%) of these women have an annual income of $5,000-$10,000; 8 (22%) have an income of $10,000-$15,000; 4 (11%) have an income of $15,000-$20,000; and 4 (11%) have an income of $20,000-$25,000.

4.2.4. Marital Status: 15 (42%) of the women interviewed are single, 14 (39%) are married, 4 (9%) are divorcees, 2 (6%) widows, 1 (2%) is separated, and 1(2 %) is living with someone.

4.2.5. Number of Children: 19 households have 56 children; 17 of these women did not have children. The mean of this distribution is 3 children per household.

4.2.6. Household Configuration: 15 (62%) of these households had 2 parents living with their children, 6 (20%) of these households are formed by single parents as head of the household, and just 1 (4%) of these women is living alone. 100% of these women’s households have a very limited expenditure level. 100% of the households and families
where a male pattern is present has a patriarchal structure. 100% of these households are formed by immediate and extended family members.

**4.2.7. Employment Status:** 100% of these women are self-employed or employed at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. They combine their occupation at the market with additional activities that generate an income.

**4.2.8. Country of Origen:** 9(26%) of these women come from Mexico, 1(2 %) from the U.S. as a second generation immigrant, 2(5%) from Jamaica, 4(11%) from Cuba, 4(11%) from Haiti, 1(2%) from Guatemala, 2(5%) from Nicaragua, 3(8%) from Honduras, 3(8%) from El Salvador, 1(2%) from Venezuela, 1(2%) from Chile, 2(5%) from Colombia, and 3(8%) from Argentina.

**4.3. Setting of the Case Study**

This study’s interviews were carried out in Princeton, a suburban neighborhood located in South Dade County in the State of Florida (see Figure 1). This area of Dade County is configured by suburban sectors of the City of Homestead, Naranja, and Florida City, surrounded by rural areas of The Redlands and Silver Palm. In these locations there are large fields in which several agricultural crops such as tomatoes peppers, beans, strawberries, and flowers are harvested with the employment of immigrants, a source of abundant cheap labor force. To the south of Princeton is the City of Homestead, a suburban community located in South Dade County. Homestead it is highly populated by Mexican and Central American immigrants that find agricultural work in the surrounding rural areas (Census Bureau, 2000).
Figure 1: Geography location of The Redland Harvest Market Village in South Dade County, Florida

Figure 2 shows the general location and grounds of The Redland Harvest Market Village. This ethnic market is a private corporation founded in 1983. It is located in an area of approximately one square mile that includes a central two storage building, two buildings used as stands locations and storage space for merchandise, a large roofed area for harvest products, a garden center, five kitchens with setting areas, a toilet building, and outside booths located in an open area.
The number of immigrant women interviewed for this case study reached a total of 36 individuals. This group of women represents 10.6% of the total population of people working in The Redland Harvest Market Village all of whom share 340 individual stands. For the purpose of the analysis, this study used a common definition of women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village as individuals sharing a working space, either as employers or employees, performing an economic activity in order to generate an income (Waldinger, 1996; Waldinger, Adrich, & Ward, 1990).

4.4. Presentation of the Data Collected

Table 1 shows a detailed breakdown of women interviewed for this case study. Each individual in Table 1 is presented with their respective age, education, annual
income, marital status, household composition, number of kids, and country of origin and employment status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>INCOME (1000s)</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLD</th>
<th>KIDS</th>
<th>PLACE OF BIRTH</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>10-15</td>
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<td>Parents and Children</td>
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<td>Cuba</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Married</td>
<td>Parents and Children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Selective data presentation.

Figure 3 shows this study’s sample age distribution. This group of immigrant women’s ages range from 14 to 79 years old, with the greatest concentration of
individuals in the 38-46 age range. The majority of these women are in their productive years as workers, striking a great similarity to male immigrants that migrate during their active working age.

![Figure 3: Women's age groups](image)

Figure 4 shows the educational level of the group of immigrant women selected as the sample population for this study. Close to 50% of the respondents have had some kind of secondary education, approximately 22% of them had some college education, and 30% had attended only elementary school. Again, it can be observed that this particular group breaks away from the traditional conceptualization of immigrant women as uneducated female immigrants. Their educational level is relatively high in relation to the type of occupation they hold in this ethnic market.
Figure 4: Women's educational level

Figure 5 shows the interviewees’ annual income. In spite of the variations in age range, education, marital status, and nationality of this sample population, the majority of these women belong to the working-class and had a low income. The annual average household income as reported by the respondents was approximately of $14,000 U.S. dollars, compared to the $42,000.450 annual gross domestic per capita for The U.S. in 2005 (International Monetary Fund, IMF, 2005). This amount included their ethnic market’s earnings as well as additional income from other household members. The typical household in this study’s sample had a very limited level of expenditure and consumption. The majority of these women’s families had a small budget to meet basic needs at a low standard of living. In most cases, it required the essential contribution of the wife’s wages, however diminutive, to make ends meet. In these households, the need for financial capital was critical at all times.
Figure 5: Women's annual income

Figure 6 shows the marital status of this group of women. The majority of the women interviewed in this study are single. This distribution also includes married women with or without children, single women with or without children, women leaving with a partner with or without children, separated or divorced women with or without children, widowed women with or without children, This distribution can be used to point out an alteration of the classical conceptualization of an immigrant woman’s profile as a companion to male immigrants when migration occurs.

Figure 6: Women's marital status
Figure 7 shows the number of kids per household in this distribution. About half of the women involved in this study have children. The average number of children in this distribution was 3 per household. 47% of these women’s households did not have children. 53% of these households have children.

![Figure 7: Number of kids per household](image)

Figure 8 shows this group of immigrant women’s household compositions. The majority (62%) of these women’s household had two parents present. The case where a single parent is head of the household is just a 20%. The remaining households are formed by adults with no children and women living with relatives or alone.
Figure 9 shows this group of immigrant women’s place of origin. The majority of these women came from Latin American regions with Mexico as the major sender country. Follow up by the Caribbean region with Haiti and Cuba. This distribution sustains great similarities with other immigrants groups in the California (Los Angeles), Texas, New Mexico, New York, and Chicago where the agricultural economic sector and the urban informal economic sector seem attract Mexican and Central American immigrants, as well as Caribbean immigrants.
As mentioned in the previous chapter, this case study relied on data gathered through various research techniques which included base line information collected from archival data and focus groups. It also included work field information, on the market in general and on each individual involved in this study. This information was obtained through the use of participant observation and in-depth interviewing. All 36 women answered inquires dealing with general information about their economic activities performed in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, conditions under which these economic activities are carried out, family structure and specific household information, their occupational trajectories, and their perception of paying job outside home. Within this questionnaire, interviewers were presented with questions dealing with household
budgets, economic survival mechanisms, decision-making power, conjugal relations, and
norms and values relating to their roles as mothers, wives, and workers.

For the purpose of carrying on these interviews, *The Redland Harvest Market Village* was visited on numerous occasions in order to establish a social rapport with these women. This connection allowed for an understanding of their opinions and views, as well as the sources of their doubts and concerns. The interviewing process, focus groups, and participant observation generated a learning environment that ultimately allowed changes of a prior outsider’s view of the ethnic market reality for one more in tune with these women’s own perceptions.

Theoretically speaking, ethnic markets are an economic expression of what is known as the informal sector, economic activities that are not recorded in official statistics, and which operate in the absence of administrative monitoring (Leonard, 2001). For South Florida’s ethnic economic enclave, the informal sector has been a key element in its consolidation and maintenance; first, through informal channels such as networks and social contacts, the local economic enclave has had an available pool of cheap immigrant labor force. Second, because of an informal employment structure, the local economic enclave got away with paying its workers lower wages than the ones established in the formal economic sector and maintaining poor working conditions. Third, the immigration status of these immigrant workers came to play a decisive role in the job settlement of them. In cases of illegality these workers were left without legal protection against labor exploitation and marginalization. These circumstances allowed for a reduction in the processing cost of manufacturing and final products, generating a surplus value that conducted the ethnic enclave firms’ growth and enrichment.
Prior to this case study, due to the informality of the ethnic market structure, it was a lack of information about the dynamics that involved the ethnic market’s economic role within the local economy. The ethnic market operates within an informal structure of hidden patterns in its trade transactions, and cash payments only. The ethnic market often uses family input as labor force, and the immigrant status of the people involve in it is often questionable (Masurel, Njkamp, & Vindigni, 2004; Waldinger, 1996). It would be unfeasible to gather reliable data on earnings, budgets, and tax payments that take place in the ethnic market without a certain degree of confidentiality. Therefore, the initial contacts established through the focus groups in this case study were crucial in providing the base line contacts for the latter development of a bond of trust with this group of women interviewed.

4.5. Conclusion

The information presented in this case study is primary data gathered during direct contact with the group of immigrant women selected as target of examination. Focal groups, participant and direct observation, as well as in-depth interviews were used as methodological tools to assist in the collection of facts and figures of these women daily routines in The Redland Harvest Market Village.

The group of women use by this case study as knowledgeable informants has homogeny in its profile with categories of gender, social class, and ethnicity. However, heterogenic elements such as age, educational level, and marital status are present as well.
The group of women used as unity of analysis on this case study has experienced gendered constrictions within a patriarchal family structure, where their power for decision making, and bargain as members of the family circle were non existence or very limited.

This group of women presents a vulnerable profile exposed to exploitation marginalization and isolation from the mainstream economy due to their lack of entrepreneurial skills, language deficiency, limited spatial mobility, bias networks and social contacts, and illegal immigration status.

The local Cuban economic enclave can serve as a sort of social cluster for these immigrant women; sheltering them from higher labor market demands. But at the same time it can become an environment where they experience exploitation and marginalization due to lower wages and poor working conditions.

The ethnic market as an economic body can become an income facilitator for these women but at the same time, due to its informal structure and often underground nature it can become a socio economic entrapment for them as well.

There are numerous ethnic markets located around the South Florida area. However, their economic activities as well as their input in the local economy have been generally ignored until now, owed to the alternative and marginal nature of their structure and performance, as well as the difficulties in gathering information about their dynamics.

The group of immigrant women approach on this research keeps patterns of comparison with female immigrant groups elsewhere in the U.S. Studies conducted in Los Angeles, U.S. Mexican-border, Chicago, and New York revel elements of these
women’s life configurations of ethnicity, class, and gender that are present in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* female workers.

In spite of many similarities with other female immigrant groups elsewhere in the U.S. The women working at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* should be considered different in several counts. In Florida 16.4% of its population is foreign born, this is one of the largest percentage of foreign born populations living in a U.S.’ state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The majority of them clustered in South Florida; specifically they call the City of Miami home. The permeability of the local society allows immigrants to have voice and agency within the community that on time perhaps produce gains and benefits for them. Other elements to take under consideration are the numerous economic niches in which newcomers cluster; a large informal sector within the local economy; and the physical location of South Florida as main portal to the U.S. for Latin American and Caribbean socio economic exchange.

There are numerous ethnic markets located around the South Florida area. However, their economic activities as well as their input in the local economy have been generally ignored until now, due perhaps to the underground nature of their structure and performance, as well as the difficulties in gathering information about their dynamics. In this research, issues that have not been explored previously come to light when referring to ethnic markets. First, the ethnic market’s role is to be an economic establishment that generates income inputs and outputs in the local economy. Another aspect of the ethnic market’s role is to be a source of income and financial independence for immigrant women. In some cases, the ethnic market can be conceptualized as a merely functional character in the local economy providing employment for immigrants, and in this way it
alleviates the burden for the state. At the same time, the ethnic market’s economic activities generate small financial revenues for the local economy. However, in terms of sustained economic development, the economic process and income generated within the ethnic market do not necessarily promote the upgrading of immigrant women’s socioeconomic status and their well being. Immigrant women participating in ethnic markets such as The Redland Harvest Market Village remain isolated from the mainstream economy, becoming socially marginalized and segregated as well. The ethnic market represents for immigrant women an easy and fast venue to enter the labor market through the informal sector. With the participation in the ethnic market immigrant women have the opportunity of generating a small income, making use of their limited working skills. This financial revenue allows these women to experience minor gains of financial independence and decision power within their family structure. However, at the same time, they find themselves entrapped in an alternative economy, a subsistence socioeconomic system that does not have room for long-term improvement of their status as immigrant labor force and does not allow a rupture from a patriarchal family structure.

The next chapter will center the discussion on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered through focus groups, participant observation, and in-depth knowledgeable inform interviews. This data analysis will be based on an ethnographic methodological approach of a non-universal sample population with collected data that is mainly non-statistical. The contents of the data will be explained by the use of cross table tabulation of the dependent and independent variables present in this case study. Frequency distributions, reliability procedures, and correlation analysis will be used as well.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED

5.1. Overview

Chapter V focuses on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered through ethnographic techniques presented in Chapter III. The ethnographic methodological approach employed relies on a non-universal sample population of actual participants. The data is mainly non-statistical, and does not pretend to be representative of The Redland Harvest Market Village participants nor, much less, of the whole South Florida immigrant population. The data is presented using cross table tabulations of the dependent and independent variables examined during this case study. Frequency distributions, reliability procedures, and correlation analysis are used as statistical procedures to explore the many dimensions of the socio-economic relationship between immigrant women and the ethnic market.

In the preceding chapter the data collected on immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village was presented, providing an introductory overview of the subject population and the setting of this case study. Key socio-economic variables that constitute principal components of their livelihoods were enlightened. At the individual level, variables such as age, marital status, education, and nationality were found to be related to class and gender. Parting from the initial demographic data
presentation in chapter IV, the data analysis conducted in this chapter is divided into two interrelated levels:

1. The individual level is needed to examine and explore in detail the socio-economic variables involve in these women’s daily lives. Patriarchal family structure and gender constrictions need to be explored as variables modifiers.

2. At the public level, government policies, globalization dynamics, labor market demand, ethnic economic enclaves, ethnic economic niches, and social contact networks influenced dramatically the outcome of the women’s performance in the local economy.

As point of reference for the analysis ahead, there is a need to underscore several elements ignored in the traditional conceptualizations of the class, gender and ethnicity.

- The subordination of women has originated from gender-related factors and patterns of growth that generate acute class differences and social hierarchies (Benería, 2003; Sen, Gita, & Grown, 1987).
- The location of women in the development process has to be focused on the roots of gender differentiation and the generation of inequalities affecting women.
- The family circle has to be examined from the complexities of household interaction to the asymmetrical exchanges among family members.
- Women are not passive recipients of change and victims of forces they do not generate or control. They have their own economic strategies of survival, resistance and struggle that obviously have to endure significant constraints due to their subordination in society.
5.2. Occupational Category of Immigrant Women Participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village

The group of immigrant women approached in this case study was participating in economic activities inside The Redland Harvest Market Village within two occupational categories. Some of them perform as employees, or wage salary workers for an owner of a stand; while others are self-employed functioning as owners of a stand with perhaps the help of family members, relatives, or persons hired as paid helpers. These women also combine their Redland Harvest Market Village occupations with other income-generating activities outside the market, such as housekeepers, nannies, and caregivers in private homes. In some cases these women work as part-time employees in manufacture and assembly for local factories or take on home industrial assignments.

5.3. Type of Goods Sold in the Redland Harvest Market Village

The Redland Harvest Market Village offers a wide variety of commodities to its clientele. The various goods sold include prepared foods, household maintenance products, clothing and accessories, jewelry, ethnic music, plants and garden supplies, small pets and fresh harvest products. The Redland Harvest Market Village is a private establishment that was founded in order to meet the needs of the growing ethnic community of Southern Florida’s Dade County. The Redland Harvest Market Village serves two basic socio-economic purposes. First, it offers its clientele ethnic products at a moderate market price through informal cash-only transactions. Second, the ethnic market provides its patrons the opportunity to meet and socialize in a common place with their fellow counterparts.
5.4. Variables Interacting in this Case Study

5.4.1. Independent Variables: The independent variables examined in this case study are the constraints and attributes that are part of this group of immigrant women’s livelihood. These are comprised of gender, ethnicity, age, immigrant status, educational status, marital status, number of children, and patriarchal family structure.

5.4.2. Dependent Variables: There are several dependent variables interacting in this case study, such as income, occupation, employment status, the ethnic market, empowerment and decision-making. However, for analyzing purposes, income has been selected to be tested as the main modifier of these immigrant women’s livelihood components. Financial independence modify immigrant women’s livelihoods and this can influence or can conduct to the emergence of agency, the women ability to make and act on their own life choices, in ways that challenge power relations (Kabeer, 2005). The creation of agency result in changing how these women see themselves, rising their sense of self-worth and empowerment.

The combination of varied socio-economic components of immigrant women’s livelihood allows for an analytical process of cross correlation and comparison amongst different components. For analytical purposes it is necessary initially to establish the typology of the variables interacting in this case study. Patriarchal family structure, gender and ethnicity are part of the group of independent variables (age, educational level, marital status, number of children, gender, ethnicity, and occupation status) which are modified by the introduction of dependent variables. The ethnic market and income, generated by this group of immigrant women from their participation in The Redland
Harvest Market Village, are dependent variables that modify the pre-established order of these immigrant women’s livelihoods. The women’s family interactions and their livelihood, with contextual access and gendered constrictions are independent variables that are altered by the presence of financial capital or income which is the main dependent variable in this research.

5.4.3. Rationality for Prioritizing Variables

During the analytical process of this case study it was necessary to emphasize the weight of certain socio-economic variables present in these immigrant women’s livelihood. This prioritizing of variables was done in order to satisfy the three tenets of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining (Yin, 1994a). Independent variables such as age, educational level, marital status, and number of children were deeply examined. Initially they were handled as autonomous elements and later combined with dependent variables such as annual income in order to establish interactions and correlations among them. The interpretation of these findings made it possible to establish a logic link between the data and the main propositions of this study: 1) The invisibility of the production value of immigrant women’s economic activities resulting from being considered an extension of their reproduction and domestic tasks; 2) The feminization of the global labor market, with its increasing demand for female labor force, where immigrant women are considered a source of cheap labor, and the changing profile of immigrant women from mere passive companions of male immigrants to autonomous individuals migrating on their own initiative; 3) The ethnic market as an economic agent of change in the lives of immigrant women participating on it.
5.4.4. Rationality for Combining Variables

The data in this case study have been separated into variable pairings in order to establish cross tabulations comparisons and correlations among them. In the first stage of the analysis, each independent variable was combined with a dependent variable in order to observe the correlation between the two. The second stage of this analysis explores possible interrelations among variables in cross table correlations.

5.5. Cross Tabulations of Dependent and Independent Variables

5.5.1. Region of Origin, and Age

The first correlation, between the independent variables of origin and age, needs to be established in order to examine cultural heritage and maturity. Based on the group of women interviewed for this study, the big influx contributor of immigrant females in their teenage years come from the regions of North America (including Mexico), Central America, and South America. Within the ages of 21 to 30 years there are an increased number of female immigrants from the Caribbean region. In the age category of 31 to 40 years there is a presence of women from North America (Mexico) and Central America there is neither representation from the Caribbean region nor the South America region in this age category. In the category from 41 to 50 years of age the Caribbean has a high index of immigrants followed by Central America; the influx from the region of North America and South American region remain the same. Within the category of 51 to 60 years of age the North America region (Mexico) is the bigger sender; the regions of the Caribbean and Central America remain the same but there is no representation from South America. In the category of 61 to 79 years of age the influx of immigrants is
stabilized for the Caribbean, North and South American regions with the exception of the Central American region which does not have any representation. The presence of immigrant women from the Caribbean, North America, Central America, and South America does not present a stable pattern across the different age categories. However, it is perceptible that women in their active working age are originated from the regions of Central America, North America (Mexico) and the Caribbean. The majority of younger women or minors come from the regions of North America (Mexico), Central America and South America. Older women representation in this correlation is a lot smaller than women in their active working age. Teenagers in the company of their parents and women in their active working age have a greater representation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. The results of the analysis of the correlation between age and country of origin shows patterns of comparison with previous female immigrant studies conducted in the U. S. The group of immigrant women selected for this case study keeps patterns of comparison in countries of origin, and age groups, consistent with other studies of female immigrant influx into the U. S. (Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Ehrenreich and Russel, 2002; Fernandez-Kelly and Garcia, 1986; Garcia, 1996; Handagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Portes and Rumbant, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993). These researchers pointed out that Mexico, the Central American countries and the Caribbean region are the main contributors of immigrant waves toward the United States.
5.5.2. Income and Age

Women involve in The Redland Harvest Market Village present different levels of variation concerning to their age related to income. Younger women consider their participation in the market as a temporary solution that allows them to acquire a small income without the need of a long time commitment, or the need of specific training, licenses or working permits. Older women rely heavily on market earnings. They invest human and financial capital on the ethnic market, which they regard as a long-term entrepreneurial venture. The majority of the women in their teens and twenties (38%) generate a very low income of $5,000-$10,000 annually, while women in their thirties (8%) generate incomes from $5,000-$25,000 per year. The younger the women the lower the income they generate. This pattern is present through the whole distribution in figure 2. The majority of the women in their forties (11%) generate an income of $10,000-$15,000 per year while the majority of women in their fifties (6%) generate an annual income of $20,000-$25,000. Women in their sixties and seventies generate an annual
income of $5,000-$25,000. Younger women’s earnings are concentrated in the lower categories of income, while older women’s earnings fluctuate from the lowest categories to the highest categories of annual income. *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, with its mainly weekend hours of operation (Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays), does not give immigrant women opportunities for substantial output production. The figures presented in the chart below, correspond to income generated from combining economic activities performed in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* with additional activities in the services sector as part-time maids, nannies, or caretakers in private homes. Some of these women also merge their market activities with work for local factories performed at home.

![Figure 11: percentage of immigrant women, their age and income.](image)

5.5.3. Income and Decision-Making

Immigrant women interviewed in this research had experienced noticeable changes in their livelihoods due to the generation of income from economic activities performed at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. At an individual level, their status
within their patriarchal family circle had undergone favorable alterations. Income and decision-making, as two dependent variables were par to examine the livelihood modifications faced by these women and a potential of agency creation and therefore a sense of self-esteem and empowerment. An overwhelming 95% of the women involved in this case study have experienced gains in decision-making power with their entrance into The Redland Harvest Market Village. These women’s access to a small income had earned them limited financial independence allowing them new room for bargaining within their household circle. Although the majority of the women interviewed in this study had an annual income concentrated in the lowest category of $5,000-$10,000 (see chap. IV, table 1, figure 5), their socio economic status level raised considerably as opposed to their individual and social status prior to entrance and participation in the ethnic market. These women were able to create agency in their livelihoods and act upon gendered constrictions and cultural traditions impose on them. Women’s gain in power of decision making, voice, and agency within their family circle and community associated with their introduction into labor market has been pointed out in prior studies that had examined the immigrant female entrepreneurial experience in the U.S., South East Asia and Latin America. (Dollar and Gatti, 1999; Ehrenreich & Russel, 2002; Fernandez-Kelly & Garcia, 1986; Garcia, 1996; Handagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Kabeer, 2000; Leonard, 1998; Lim, 1997; Portes & Rumbant, 1996; Portes & Stepick, 1993 Seguino, 2000; Spinal and Grasmuck, 1997; 1998).
5.5.4. Income and Employment Status

When the variables of income and employment status are examined in correlation with each other, several issues come to light. Women that participate in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* as employees earn the lowest income. But on the other hand, immigrant women that own their stand at the market generate higher incomes than the ones under a wage paying job. This combination of variables shows that 39% of the immigrant women interviewed in this case study work as wage employees with an annual income of $5,000-$10,000. 16% of these women are self-employed with an annual income of $5,000-$10,000. 3% of the women are employed with an annual income of $10,000-$15,000. 19% of these women are self-employed with an annual income of $10,000-$15,000. 3% of these women are employed with an annual income of $15,000-$20,000. 8% of these women are self-employed with an annual income of $15,000-$20,000. 3% of these women are employed with an annual income of $20,000-$25,000.
8% of these women are self-employed with an annual income of $20,000-$25,000. There is a correlation between income and employment status. The higher the annual income, the less number of women found working as wage employees in the market. The lower the income the higher number of women found working as wage employees in the market. In contrast, the higher the annual income is, the higher the number of self-employed women participating in economic activities in the market. With a lower annual income situation, the presence of self-employed women appears to decrease. The majority of women (55%) are concentrated in the category with the lowest income of $5,000-10,000. Also the majority of these women are self-employed (51%), and 48% of these women are wage employees in the market.

![Graph showing percentage of immigrant women, their employment status, and their income.](image)

Figure 13: Percentage of immigrant women, their employment status, and their income.

### 5.5.5. Income and Household Composition

The annual income generated by immigrant women participating in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* is very low compared to the average U.S. annual income. The average annual income for households in the U.S. is $48,000 (U.S. census Bureau, 2000).
The majority of families in this study with both parents and kids have an annual income between $5,000 and $10,000. According to the household income levels declared by these women, the earnings generated by their economic participation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* keep them well under the poverty line. The economic strategies used by these women in the ethnic market allow them no room for a minimal accumulation of wealth or a standard expenditure level. Although these women gain a certain degree of financial independence and a limited decision making power, they find themselves trapped into a mere survival economic stage. Adult women with no children earn the highest income. Women living with a partner and children earn the smallest income in the market.

Figure 14: Percentage of immigrant women, their household composition, and their income.

### 5.5.6. Income and Region of Origin

Women involved in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* present different levels of earning income according to their place of origin. Their income distribution does not present a pattern that correlates level of income with nationality. The majority of women
from Mexico earns the lowest income ($5,000-$10,000), but at the same time a considerable percentage of Mexican women also earn a relative high income ($20,000-$25,000). Most of the immigrant women participating in this case study generate a small income from their performance in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*.

![Figure 15: Region of origin and income.](image)

**5.5.7. Income and Education**

Of the group of immigrant women interviewed for this study, the majority had had some form of secondary education. However, in this distribution higher education does not necessarily equate to the generation of higher income, perhaps due to the fact that the activities performed for these women in *The Redland Harvest Market Villa* do not require a set of high work skills. The majority of women classified in the lowest income category are also classified as high school education participants. Women with an elementary education level earn lower wages as well as the highest wages. The majority of women with some college education are clustered in the lowest categories of
earning income in this distribution. This distribution has a cross table correlation with the
distribution of age and income (table 11), as well as income and employment status (table
13). Younger and educated women earn a low salary at The Redland Harvest Market
Village. Younger women do not invest much human and financial capital in the market
and their employment status at the market is as employees because they see their
occupation at the market as temporary (table 4). In this case study, education and income
correlation proves a break with the traditional view of immigrants entering the U.S. The
educational level of this particular group of immigrant women is higher than others
recorded in previous studies on immigrants in the U.S. However, if the educational level
is examined in correlation with the place of origin of this group (Chapter IV); the regions
of North America (Mexico included) and Central America have the highest index of
women with only elementary educational level. While the regions of the Caribbean and
South America cluster women with secondary and college education.

Figure 16: Level of education and income.
5.5.8. Income and Number of Children

In this distribution, immigrant women without children are concentrated in the lower earnings level. However, women with no children are the greatest portion of the highest income level as well. Women with the greatest number of children (5) are clustered in the lowest level of earnings. Women with 2 children to 4 children are grouped in the middle income categories. This distribution has a correlation with income and age; younger women with no children earn less because they do not invest human or financial capital on the ethnic market. Younger women work on a temporary basis in The Redland Harvest Market Village and therefore are not attracted to long term work commitment within the market. Older women with children depend on their earnings to meet the needs of their household. Older women with dependents see the ethnic market as an opportunity to invest in a small enterprise, to generate a needed income, and at the same time, to acquire some retail skills necessary to survive in this type of business or apply in future ventures. They aspire to establish a socio economic relationship in the ethnic market under commitment toward permanence or at least a long term setting.
5.5.9. Income and Marital Status

The majority of immigrant single women participating in this case study generate the lowest income in this distribution. However, there is also a great percentage of immigrant women living with a partner that are low income earners. There is an established relationship between income and marital status in this distribution. The higher the income level generated the lower the presence of single women in the ethnic market and conversely the lower the income generated the higher the presence of single women in the ethnic market. This distribution has direct correlation with income and age, and income and number of children. Younger single women with no children are the lower income earners in The Redland Harvest Market Villa while older, married women with dependents are categorized as the greatest income earners in this ethnic market.
Figure 18: marital status and income.

5.6. Findings and Correlations among Variables

In the graphs above the independent variables hold patterns of correlation among themselves and at the same time they show correlation with income, power of decision making, and employment status, the dependent variables selected in this analysis. Cross tabulation examination shows the interrelationship existent among all the variables examined in this case study. Income, power of decision making and employment status as the main dependent variables are the greatest modifier of the independent variables in this analysis. The independent variables of age, place of origin, marital status, educational level, household composition, and number of children, interact together to produce an inventory of assets and constraints faced by this group of immigrant women. The family circle with its patriarchal structure and the ethnic market are the settings in which these women interact. Financial independence empowers these women and avails a limited bargain power with which to participate in decision making within the family framework,
and at the same time it allows them a certain degree of voice within their community. On time these alterations conduct to the creation of agency and the increase of self steam that enable these women to act upon gendered situations impose on them by others. At the microeconomic level, the ethnic market functions as a facilitator. *The Redland Harvest Market Village* is a fast and relatively easy venue for the entrance of these women into the local labor market in order to generate income. At the Macroeconomic level, *The Redland Harvest Market Village* absorbs from the available pool of cheap labor provided by immigrants that otherwise would become dependent on government welfare, while simultaneously yields production output into the local economy.

The careful examination of the figures presented in this chapter provides a socio-economic profile of this group of immigrant women modified by their participation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. However, despite the limitations of this case study due to the small group of informants approached, the findings are relevant and enlightening. Through different combination of variables, key elements present in the interrelationship among immigrant women and *The Redland Harvest Market Village* emerges from this analysis. Some of these elements present a correlation woven throughout the analytical process. For instance, age, level of education, marital status, and number of children have a correlation with employment status. Those immigrant women who are single, young, without children, and in the process of getting a higher education participate as employees in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. They are hired as stand attendants, working under a wage salary. On the other hand, those immigrant women who are married, older, with children, and poorly educated perform as
small entrepreneurs. They are self-employed at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, as stand owners.

Younger, educated, and single women see the ethnic market as a transitory situation that allows them to generate a needed income to get by and at the same time the market offers them the opportunity to acquire the occasional retailing skills. Older, uneducated, and married women perceive the ethnic market as a source of financial independence that in spite of being minimal, will allow them to play an active role in decision making at home. At the same time they see the ethnic market as a portal into a wider future entrepreneurial venture.

Older and uneducated women with children invest more human and financial capital into the ethnic market. They need a steady and permanent source of income in order to maintain their household, with or without the help of a partner. In contrast, young, single, and educated women without dependents regard their participation in the ethnic market as a temporary occupation. The majority of young women are participating in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* as hired help for their parents or older relatives. They generate an extra income to be used for personal needs. In this group of immigrant women, most of the women coming from South America and the Caribbean have a high educational level in contrast with women from North America (Mexico) and Central America.

Does income generated in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* really makes a substantial difference in these women’s livelihood? Several socialist-feminist authors (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Lim, 1997) argue that widespread norms defining women’s “proper” roles as wives and mothers draw them back economically. In the export-
oriented models such as the *Maquiladoras* in the U.S.-Mexican border, multinational corporations take advantage of and reinforce women’s structural vulnerability within their labor market and a patriarchal family structure (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Lim, 1997). The common belief that women work only to supplement their partner’s earnings becomes a rationalization for paying them less than men. Thus working-class women find themselves with little choice but to do work, under terms dictated by multinational companies, involving repetitive, monotonous tasks for minimal wages, little job security, and no advancement opportunity (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Lim, 1997). Women’s entrance into assembly processing jobs and their subordination to unsatisfying working conditions presumably reflects their subordination to patriarchal relations in the family as well as on the factory floor (Lim, 1997).

The socio-economic relationship existent between immigrant women and the ethnic market is modified by gender and cultural constrictions. The group of immigrant women interviewed in this case study is not found to be comprised of passive bearers of class and gender relations. They do occasionally resist and struggle on an individual or collective basis as workers in the ethnic market and as gendered subjects confronting a particularly unfavorable bargaining situation at home. They also develop strategies to create minimal spaces of control over their lives. But what are the conditioning factors, boundaries and links between forms of struggle that women develop within the domestic domain? It is safe to assume that wives’ access to an autonomous income will automatically empower them in the bargaining of gender relations within the household? And how do changes in family dynamics relate to the society’s class and gender relations in which these women are embedded? These women come from patriarchal societies
where the family interaction functions in accordance with internal hierarchies. Males have the decision making power while females are relegated to a subordinate position in their families and society. Even if female family members generate an income, their socio-economic independence is very limited. The male is always assumed to be the main breadwinner in the household and in charge of all major individual and collective decisions.

In spite of the above considerations, according to the women interviewed for this case study, the earnings generated in the ethnic market, no matter how low, allowed them to secure a minimum space of autonomous control as a mechanism for pursuing goals of household well-being and repair the deterioration to self-image caused by economic dependency on their husbands or parents. However, from the standpoint of long-term changes and benefits that participation in the ethnic market brings to these women, it is difficult to be hopeful about the socio-economic possibilities offered by this type of work. Several questions can be raised at this point. 1) What level of financial independence is obtained by these women with earnings generated in the ethnic market? 2) What kind of gains and changes occur within these immigrant women’s family internal hierarchies? 3) Are these changes and gains temporary or permanent? Do these changes conduct to the creation of agency to take action against gender constrictions imposed upon them? Income gives women bargaining capacity within their household. However, women do not have full control of their earnings as the male counterparts do. The family’s maintenance and reproduction depends upon women’s work load; the existence of mechanisms of working class reproduction is made possible by women’s labor strategies and detriment. The quality and viability of class reproduction at the household level is
intimately connected to women’s strategies and forms of gender subordination. Men have an individualistic approach to family’s welfare while women have a collective and communal approach to family’s welfare. Therefore, it is necessary to eradicate the asymmetric division of labor and child rearing and perform strategies that ensure women’s own control of their sexuality and reproductive capacity. The ethnic market offers immigrant women a more free or informal venue to generate an income in an industrialized country. But at the same time the ethnic market fails to gives immigrant women the opportunity to engage themselves at full force into the local economy. The ethnic market falls short of allow immigrant women to escape the informal alternative economy of incipient structure and survival income. Therefore, immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village are not in a position to experience a substantial alteration within their patriarchal family circle or their gendered work structure.

5.7. Conclusion

As discussed previously, it was not the intent of this research to select a representative sample of the immigrant women population participating in ethnic markets in the U.S. or South Florida. In fact, it is unlikely that such a sample could be generated given the extraordinarily wide range of ethnic markets and immigrant women’s backgrounds. Rather the intent is to begin a process that will allow the development of a theory of immigrant women’s socio-economic experience in ethnic markets. This theory can then be retested in varying contexts and refined. Ideally the results will be generalized not from a sample of a population, but from the sample of the theoretical
framework. That framework can then be applied to other settings and refined in order to allow generalizations from the theory to wider populations.

This study focuses on a very specific group of immigrant women who are participating in an ethnic market in South Dade. It should be pointed out that this study cannot be used to make generalizations about ethnic markets or immigrant women as a population. It can, however, be used to begin to identify factors that appear consistently when studying immigrant women and ethnic markets. This case study’s goal is to develop a theory on immigrant women participation in the ethnic market that can be tested in later studies. Further research will also seek to expand the scope of this research to a wider variety of immigrant women and settings, and will be used to support or examine theoretical hypotheses about immigrant women’s experiences that are developed in this study. Additional research can explore whether the factors most influencing the immigrant women participating in this ethnic market are also important to the experiences of immigrant women in similar situations elsewhere.

The results obtained in this case study may be influenced by the limited size of the group analyzed. The specifics of the group of informants in origin and size are not representative of the entire female immigrant population living in South Florida. This research is limited to the qualitative analysis of a specific ethnic market in South Florida. Due to the small overall group’s size, there are constraints in applying broader statistical methodologies. Although the specific results of this study may be significant, application of the more general concepts to the community may be limited. However, the findings of this study can enlighten and enrich the conceptualization of immigrant women’s socio-
economic experience in ethnic markets and their interrelationship with the labor market in the United States.

In this case study, the ethnic market emerges as an agent of preservation in maintaining the existent modes of production where immigrant women are placed at the bottom of the labor ladder within the South Florida economy. Economic factors become coercive mechanisms in any effort to impose or resist the culturally accepted definition of family structure. Although income generated in the ethnic market by performing economic activities provides immigrant women with some agency to act upon gendered constrictions, and voice to bargain within their family structure; this financial empowerment neither creates a long-term socio-economic independence from the male patriarchal domination nor a permanent sense of well-being.

The production value of immigrant women’s performance at the ethnic market becomes invisible within the economic process due to several elements that come to play a role on it. First, the ethnic market’s production contribution to the local economy is minimal. Second, the earnings obtained from the economic activities performed within the ethnic market are too small to generate genuine changes. Third, women cannot make use of earnings generated from the ethnic market freely. Fourth, women’s work at the ethnic market is considered an extension of their domestic obligations and as such complementary to men’s work. Fifth, men retain their role as family’s main bread-winner. Therefore sixth, men maintain their role as the main voice within the family circle and the community. The flexibility of the ethnic market work schedule with its weekend hours of operation allows women time to spend at home, ready to attend to their children and husband’s wishes. Working women’s recognition of long-term gender
interests and their awareness of subordination are only partial because of male threats of withdrawal of economic support and/or threats of physical or verbal abuse.

Immigrant women accept the gendered division of labor at home and at the workplace. They perceive this division as a natural distribution of roles of male and female within the society; that allows them to perform as mothers and be household managers holding a part-time paid job outside their homes.

The next chapter, chapter VI, summarizes and discusses the main findings of the analysis of the data collected, concerning immigrant women’s socio-economic experience in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* and the changes resultant from this relationship upon their livelihoods.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Overview

This chapter serves several purposes. First, the findings of this study are assembled together to grant wide-ranging answers to the main research questions of this case study. Do immigrant women improve their socio-economic status via incorporation into the South Florida ethnic market? Do immigrant women increase their sense of “empowerment” and “well-being” via incorporation into South Florida ethnic market? This section gathers the study findings in two separate groups, one analytical and the other theoretical. Second, this chapter presents the practical implications of this research. It summarizes and discusses the methodological and theoretical contributions of this case study concerning the socio-economic interrelationship between immigrant women and The Redland Harvest Market Village and the impact of this correlation on their livelihoods. Third, expansion of implications of this investigation is considered and further research paths are discussed. Fifth, as a final section, the limitations of this case study are examined.

6.2. Analysis of the Case Study Results

During the analytical phase of this case study, a variety of socio-economic elements surfaced that allowed the separation of the findings into two different set of
conclusions in order to answer the main research questions posed in this ethnographic study.

6.2.1. Analytical Conclusions

The central goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate the establishment of a socioeconomic relationship of well-being and empowerment gain for immigrant women with their participation in a South Florida ethnic market. To accomplish this purpose, this case study identifies several socio-economic variables (chapters IV and V). Immigrant women livelihood is identified as the unit of analysis and the main independent variable (age, marital status, educational level, number of children, household composition, nationality) to be modified by the introduction of dependent variables such as income and power of decision making. Correlations among these variables and cross tabulations establish links and patterns of interdependency within immigrant women’s set of attributes and constraints and socio-economic external factors.

The results of this case study’s analysis reveal that the production value of immigrant women’s performance in the local ethnic market becomes invisible within the South Florida’s socio economic process in two accounts; firstly, at the microeconomic or private level of these immigrant women livelihoods and secondly at a macroeconomic or public level of South Florida economy. At a private level, several elements come to play a role, The earnings generated from the economic activities performed within the ethnic market are so low that women’s contribution to the family’s income is very small as compared to, in most of the cases, the men who keep their role as main bread-winner because their financial contribution to the household is larger than their female partner.
The women participating in this study come from patriarchal societies where male family members hold the decision-making power in while female family members are relegated to a subordinate position within their family circle and society. With the introduction of women to an outside paid job, the nature of the family interaction and its internal hierarchies do not experience major changes. Even if female family members do generate an income, their gains in socio-economic independence from the male are very limited. The male is in charge of all major individual and collective decisions. Working women’s recognition of long-term gender interests and their awareness of subordination are only partial because of male threats of withdrawal of economic support and/or threats of physical or verbal abuse.

The constraint of *The Redland Harvest Market Village* work schedule with its no more than weekend hours of operation and cash-only transactions offer women merely part time occupations that yield a limited income; the nature of the merchandize sold and the services offered in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* do not allow the production of a sizeable surplus value. Women participating in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* are forced to recur to multiple survival economic strategies to cope with the financial expenditures of their household (Mandel, 2004). The women involved in this case study often find themselves combining retail occupations at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* with private personal services else where in the community as maids, nannies or caregivers (Portes & Bash, 1985; Portes & Stepick, 1993). They juggle multiple outside paid jobs along with their domestic responsibilities at home. One of the outcomes of their double burdens as wage employees and housewives a limited spatial mobility.
At the macroeconomic or public level within the South Florida economy, immigrant women’s production value generated by their participation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* lacks impact due to the fact that the production output yielded by the ethnic market within the local economy is minimal. The ethnic market’s role as a production body in the local economy is peripheral and alternative. Therefore, the ethnic market’s economic value lacks the necessary weight to be considered a significant and effective economic body within the local economy. On the other hand, the ethnic market, as social component of the South Florida community, plays a key role in the maintenance of ethnic identity of the immigrant population. The ethnic market serves as a functional informal organization to meets the socio economic needs of immigrants by offering them ethnic goods and services as well as employment. At the same time the ethnic market offers immigrants a sort of common ground for counterparts to socialize and seek moral support.

In this case study *The Redland Harvest Market Village* emerges as an agent of reproduction, preservation, and maintenance of the existent mode of small-scale production. Within the ethnic market’s informal economic structure, immigrant women occupy the bottom rung of the labor ladder within the South Florida economy with minimal opportunities to promote to higher entrepreneurial positions. Economic factors become coercive mechanisms in an effort to impose or reinforce a culturally accepted definition of family structure. Immigrant women accept the gendered division of labor at home and at the work place. They view this division as a natural distribution of roles which allows them to perform as wage workers outside their home as well as mothers and
household managers at home; always under the supervision and leadership of the male figure at home and at work.

In order to answer the main research questions of this case study, it is necessary to look into the ethnic market as income generator in the socio economic relationship of petty trader/ survival, stability or surplus to determine the degree of well-being and empowerment this relation provides for the immigrant women participating on the ethnic market. The outcomes of the socioeconomic activities performed in the ethnic market are best expressed as a continuum ranging from survival, or narrow capital growth, to stability, or trivial capital growth, to surplus, or substantial capital growth. The differences at each point determine women’s capacity to manage with financial needs. Narrow capital growth provides no chances for saving, therefore it is impossible to reinvest in economic activities. Here these women need to engage themselves in multiple jobs to meet their household needs. On the other hand, stable and significant capital growth allows these women more room for small saving or wealth accumulation. In doing this, women are able to meet their household expenditure needs without using their investing capital.

Immigrant women performing in The Redland Harvest Market Village, find themselves in a situation where their cluster of assets modify and determine the amount of income generated and the consequential trivial capital growth or narrow capital growth. Personal constraints and assets as spatial mobility, age, employment status, marital status, are the stronger modifiers of immigrant women’s socio economic relationship with The Redland Harvest Market Village. At the same time, within these women’s cluster of assets and constraints there are relations of interdependency and
vulnerability among the variables. The degree of spatial mobility experienced by these women is a product of related cause and effect modifying their livelihood socio economic variables. These women’s degree of spatial mobility is determined by; their age and marital status; their educational level and number of children; and their household composition and language proficiency. Alternatively, spatial mobility determines the ability of these women to archive their potential capabilities into functionings. It constrains the type of occupation they can perform; the work schedule they can follow; the employment status they can secure; and the amount of income they can generate.

Participant observation and responses to open–ended survey revealed that in the case of The Redland Harvest Market Village immigrant women perform on it either as small entrepreneurs (as stands owners and employers), waged workers (employees) or unpaid relatives help. These women enjoy a limited spatial mobility due to several constraints such as age, marital status, language proficiency, immigration status, educational level, and number of children. Others constraints faced by these women are gendered networks and social contacts, lack of starting financial capital and the necessary skills to establish a new business. Most of these women work trajectory and level of schooling not only reproduced class inequalities, but also reinforced gender hierarchies through the sexual division of labor prevailing in the various processes of incorporation into wage labor.

At The Redland Harvest Market Village, differences among women with considerable spatial mobility and women with limited spatial mobility are reflected in their daily lives. Young and unmarried women without children or dependents enjoy more spatial mobility, therefore they find easy to fluctuate jobs; dispose freely of their
market’s earnings and freedom to chose to stay at the market or venture into different income generated activities while they are attending school. At the same time, within their family structure they enjoy a more favorable position without the responsibility to support children or dependents and constant male partner control. These women enjoy more freedom to pursue higher educational levels while holding a part time job at the market. In contrast, older and married women with children find themselves compelled to accept precarious work conditions at the market so as to generate a needed income while at the same time be able to undertake their responsibilities as mothers and wives at home.

At The Redland Harvest Market Village immigrant women participate under certain conditions that limited their production value. The commodities’ low market value, the small cash transactions, and services offered in the ethnic market, yield a very limited income that retains these women in a marginal and alternative subdivision of the informal sector in the local economy. In spite of that, their participation in the market facilitates the acquisition of certain retailing skills that allow a narrow experience helpful in futures entrepreneur ventures. In their private sphere, women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village experienced a perceptible gain in the power of decision-making within the family structure, due to the incorporation of income and a subsequent limited financial independency.

In the case of South Florida, the Cuban socio economic enclave plays a role as a main determinate and modifier of immigrant women entrepreneurial opportunities for cluster. The ethnic economic niches existent in South Florida draw female immigrant labor to the Cuban economic enclave and have a major impact in these immigrant women contextual attributes. The Cuban economic enclave absorbs most of the available pool of
cheap labor that is formed by unskilled immigrants. Female immigrants find themselves limited to socio and geographic boundaries set by contacts and social networks within the community. Previously obtain skills and established networks determined the type of niches in which these women will end up clustered. Retailing and private services as well as agricultural occupations are preferred by these women due to their mostly rural background. Ethnic markets around South Florida are part of the ethnic economic niches where immigrant women can enter easily and make use of their limited entrepreneurial skills. At *The Redland Harvest Market Village* immigrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean find opportunities to incorporate themselves into the local labor market and generate a small income. This can be possible because the informal market has a simple and informal configuration, and its basic infrastructure allows immigrant women to make use of their limited labor skills. Within the ethnic market, simple retailing transactions are performed and the services offered require basic domestic skills such as food preparation, cleaning, and clothes manufacturing. *The Redland Harvest Market Village* allows within its structure economic activities that yield a very limited financial capital. Therefore this is an economic body use to perform survival economic activities that do not live room for capital accumulation for any small-scale entrepreneurs or paid workers involve in it.

The economic activities performed in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* allow immigrant women to experience a few gains in their livelihoods. First, within their individual level the first gains occur at their private level or inside their family framework. With their incorporation into the ethnic market, a noticeable growth or increase in sharing the power of decision making within the family circle is immediately
experienced. Their ability to provide financial capital into the household budget gives immigrant women certain voice, a sense of self-worthy and agency to sort out domestic issues. Second, within the public sphere, their participation at The Redland Harvest Market Village allows these women to establish a social interaction with their counterparts. The market becomes sort of ethnic support and socialization site. Third, the market gives women the opportunity to venture themselves into an entrepreneurial endeavor that although simple and informal, offers them the opportunity to learn basic entrepreneurial skills.

The long-term benefits earned by immigrant women throughout their socio-economic experience with The Redland Harvest Market Village measured by the feelings of well-being and empowerment depend on the degree of change perceived by the many factors that configure these women livelihood assets. These changes can be measured by these women ability to come to terms with their limited financial independency, their sense of self-worthy and the creation of agency in their livelihoods that conducts to the birth of notions of well-being and empowerment.

6.2.2 Theoretical Conclusions

The socio-economic profile of immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village keeps patterns of comparison with other groups of immigrant women analyzed in previous studies conducted in the U.S. and in other world regions. In the Southeast Asia region, studies carried out by Lim (1997), Leonard (1998), Spinal and Grasmuck (1997; 1998), Dollar and Gatti (1999), Seguino (2000), and Kabeer (2000) have pointed out the benefits obtained by women participating in export-oriented zones in
Southeast Asia. They analyzed the effects of export-oriented, labor-intense manufacturing relying on low-cost production for global markets in Southeast Asia. These studies have shown gains both in women’s increased autonomy and bargaining power as a result of employment. Kabeer (2000) has pointed out that women’s paid work has been associated with an increase in the “power to choose.” However, the women participating in these export-processing zones have been called “weak winners” (Kabeer, 2000), on account of the many existing constraints that these women still face in their livelihood configurations. In the U.S., research such as the one conducted by Patricia Fernandez-Kelly on U.S.-Mexican border and in New York (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Fernandez-Kelly & Garcia, 1986; Fernandez-Kelly & Sassen, 1992), explored the Mexican and Central American women’s socio-economic experience in the Maquilladora mode of mass production on the U.S. Mexican border. In New York the Latina venture was examined by Fernandez-Kelly within a framework of socio-economic enclaves and ethnic niches. Alejandro Portes introduced a series of extensive studies on Latino and Caribbean immigrants in Los Angeles and Miami. He explored the origins of the Cuban socio-economic enclave as well as the ethnic niches where Latin American and Caribbean immigrants cluster (Portes, 1995; Portes & Rumbant, 1996; Portes & Stepick, 1993). In Chicago, Segura examined Latin immigrant women’s performance in the host community within a theoretical framework of a triple oppression of *class, ethnicity and gender* (Segura, 1984) faced in the new land.

The group of immigrant women used as a unit of analysis in this case study originated from the regions of North America (Mexico), Central America (Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala), and South America (Colombia, Venezuela, Chile,
and Argentina); as well as from the Caribbean (Haiti, Cuba, and Jamaica). These women’s socio-economic background presents similar levels of variation, with previous groups of female immigrants under research in the U. S. as well as other parts of the world. Their socio-economic livelihood categories of ethnicity, social class, educational level, labor skills, and family structure keep patterns of similitude with that of women involved in zones of mass production in Southeast Asia and ones working in the Maquilladora model of mass production on the U.S.-Mexican border. Social and cultural constraints faced by immigrant women in South Florida are summarized as well within three elements ethnicity, class and gender (Segura, 1984). The benefits gained by these women from their participation in The Redland Harvest Market Village can be measured in terms of their acquired degree of financial independence, decision-making, spatial mobility, and voice, as result of their partaking in The Redland Harvest Market Village. Although the economic activities performed in The Redland Harvest Market Village by this group of immigrant women are of a survival nature due to the small income generated in the process; the fact that it provides certain socio economic relief in these women livelihoods cannot be denied. The sense of well-being and empowerment achieved through the introduction of a socio-economic modifier such as earned income is noticeable in the change of these women disposition toward their role as individuals, wives, and mothers living in a community.

The study conducted by Patricia Fernandez-Kelly on the U.S. Mexican border in the Maquiladora model of mass production, pointed out that the women involved on it had not acquired substantial gains concerning their sense of well-being, voice, and empowerment. Women workers are preferred to performed this type of tedious work
because firstly, they are considered a source of cheap labor; secondly, women are stereotyped to be of a docile nature and therefore more submissive and controllable than their male counterparts; and thirdly, the majority of the women involved in these occupations have children or dependents to support financially thus they show a predisposition to tolerate hostile work conditions and low wages. Women involve in the Maquiladora mass-production economic process generally are unskilled, uneducated, young, and have children and/or dependents.

Women involved in The Redland Harvest Market Village keep patterns of similitude in several accounts with women participating in the Maquiladora economic model. The majority of these women originate from Latin America region. Most of these women are in their productive years as workers; 60% of the women participating in this study are between the ages of 22-46 years of age (see chapter IV). The majority of these women have children as dependents. These women come from a working social class. In spite of all these similarities there are also great differences among the three groups (South East Asia, U.S.-Mexican border, and The Redland Harvest Market Village). The educational level of the women approached in this case study is of a high school level. Women involved in The Redland Harvest Market Village experience a greater autonomy in the work place as opposed to their counterparts in the Maquiladora economic mode of mass production. On the work floor these women are not under constant supervision or performing repetitive tasks typical of mass production processes. Physically and emotionally they do not experience the constant oppression, control and harassment by a boss.
This case study’s findings also bear similar characteristics in common with the research conducted by Alejandro Portes in Miami (Portes, 1995; Portes and Rumbant, 1996; Portes and Stepick, 1993) in terms of origin, and socio-economic background. In his studies, Portes explores the immigrant experience in South Florida’s labor market and the origin of the Cuban socio-economic enclave. His findings on the female immigrant entrepreneurial experience in South Florida has general similarities with the ones of this case study, specifically when concerning the analysis and measure of the gains and losses experienced by these women with their entrance into the labor Market.

Segura’s examination of the Latino women in Chicago within the concepts of ethnicity, class, and gender holds vast patterns of comparison with the group of women approached in The Redland Harvest Market Village. Immigrant women involved in this South Florida’s ethnic market experience a triple oppression expressed in ethnicity, class, and gender at the individual and social level. These women face gender discrimination at home within their patriarchal family circle, being relegated to a subordinated role from their male counterparts. At their work immigrant women face a gendered mode of production where they are consider a pool of cheap labor, more submissive and easy to control, and paid less than their male counterparts. They often experience sexual harassment from their bosses and male pears. Within the local community, immigrant women’s ethnicity and socio-economic background identify them as outsiders with different physical appearance, language deficient with minimal human and financial capital to input in the community. Immigrant women in The Redland Harvest Market Village find themselves isolated from the mainstream socio-economic flow. In permanent bases the ethnic market becomes for immigrant women a place of work and socialization
but at the same time it becomes a place of socio-economic entrapment. These women fail to establish links with the mainstream community through learning the official language, and the host culture, therefore they find themselves isolated and marginalize. They live and work in a sort of alternative socio-economic environment, where they perform survival economical activities and socialize with counterparts without venture outside and establish links and associations with the host society. These women feel that they are better off in South Florida than in their place of origin, regarding their socio-economic status at home and outside their home. However, the benefits obtained are minimal and long term gains are not guaranteed. The entrance of these women in the ethnic market does not translate in immediate enduring socio-economic independence and bargain power within the patriarchal family structure and their community.

One issue that is crucial to the understanding of immigrant women’s degree of adaptability and assimilation in the U.S. society is their knowledge and management of English, the official language. Without English proficiency, immigrant women find themselves with very limited spatial mobility which leaves them entirely dependent of their counterparts for adjustment and survival in the new land. Immigrant women’s networks and social contacts become the only communication links between them, the labor market placement and the mainstream society. Counterparts that share the same cultural norms and traditions always make up immigrant women’s networks and social contacts. They constrict women’s mobility to a mode of production where a patriarchal structure constantly translates into gendered results. Women involved in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* are at a disadvantage because they are isolated from the formal
economic sector; they lack the human and financial capital needed to promote themselves
as entrepreneur that will launch them into the main stream economy.

The South Florida’s Cuban enclave often provides immigrant women with
opportunities to enter the local labor market, without the adequate work training and
language proficiency. However, this permeability comes at the price of socio-economic
entrapment and isolation from the mainstream economy. Immigrant women participating
in the South Florida Cuban economic enclave are susceptible to exploitation and
marginalization. They find themselves earning lower wages than their peers in the main
streams occupations, and unable to venture into wider entrepreneurial surroundings.

In South Florida, ethnic markets operating within the Cuban Economic enclave do
not necessarily benefit to a greater degree under the protecting umbrella of the ethnic
enclave. The majority of ethnic markets in this area do take advantage of the high
demand for ethnic products from the residents cluster in the Cuban socio-economic
enclave. However, immigrant women involved in the ethnic markets fall short when it
comes to their incorporation into the Cuban enclave and take advantage of its labor
benefits. Therefore, they find themselves without the ethnic enclave labor solidarity and
support as well as without government protection and benefits because in many cases
they lack of adequate legal documentation to reside and hold a job in the U.S. Due to the
ethnic market’s informal configuration and minimal production value; it lacks the needed
economic poise to provide immigrant women with the necessary human and financial
capital required to promote them into a broader socio-economic stage. Immigrant women
participating in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* are not in any way, in a different
socio-economic stage from those women working in the *Maquiladoras* at the U.S.-
Mexican border, or immigrant women clustered in ethnic economic niches in New York and Los Angeles. They share the same socio-economic background of ethnicity, class and gender. They face the same gendered constrictions within a patriarchal family structure.

6.3. Practical Implications of *The Redland Harvest Market Village* Case Study

In conclusion the major findings of this research are as follows. First, immigrant women use *The Redland Harvest Market Village* as an easy and fast venue to enter the South Florida labor market. Second, they perform different economic activities that yield a minimum income to configure livelihood strategies. Third, with their participation in the ethnic market immigrant women gain a limited financial independence and a bargaining position within their patriarchal family structure. Fourth, the production value of economic activities performed in the ethnic market lacks the necessary weight to be considered representative in the local economy.

For a deeper examination of the outcomes of the immigrant women performance in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, it is necessary to explore carefully the concept of empowerment and its interrelated dimensions of *agency*, *capabilities* and *functionings.* *Agency* represents here the women’s ability to make strategic life choices as where to live, whether or who to marry, whether to have children, how many children, and freedom of mobility and association. Therefore, agency is essential to the notion of empowerment. *Capabilities* are the vehicle through which agency is carry out; the potential for living the lives these women wish for. And *functionings* refer to the achievements of this potentiality or the results of acting upon their agency. Does the performance at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* able these women to exercise upon
their agency in order to achieve their strategic life choices? Do these women have the opportunity to experience a sense of self-reliance with their participation at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*?

By these women taking up waged work it is not necessarily guaranty of gains in their sense of well-being and empowerment. Immigrant women working at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* take up work mostly to as means to survival than out of choice or looking for an entrepreneurial opportunity. Therefore, their occupations become economic strategies to generate income to satisfy basic needs, as to a search of greater self-reliance. In order for these activities to become sources of greater empowerment and sense of well-being; they need to contribute to immigrant women’ feeling of independence, instead of just fulfilling survival necessities. How do these women’s socio-economic experience at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* able them to act upon a patriarchal family structure and a gendered mode of production? The introduction of these women to ‘outside’ paid occupations can give birth to a chain of events that may or may not conduct to improve their sense of well-being. Three required elements have to be present in order for these women to archive a higher notion of self-worth and empowerment. Through the generation of income comes financial independence that conducts to the creation of *Agency* (Kabeer, 2005). *Agency* can able these women to act upon their life choices and develop their potential *Capabilities* even in the presence of others opposition (patriarchal family structure and gendered mode of production). The degree of accomplishment or failure of these women’s potentialities gives room to *Functionings* or achievements that lead to their socio-economic empowerment and sense of well-being (Nussbaum, 2000; Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 1985a; 1985b).
The economic input of The Redland Harvest Market Village in the local economy is virtual insignificant or unseen, therefore the production value of the economic activities performed by immigrant women participating in it is invisible within the scope of the local economy. Nevertheless, these immigrant women undergo alterations on their livelihood configurations due to impact of the participation in The Redland Harvest Market Village. It yields small but tangible gains in financial independence and room for bargaining within a patriarchal family structure.

The Cuban economic enclave and its ethnic niches play key roles as modifiers in the local economy. First, through its firms the Cuban enclave provides a demand for immigrant workers, predominantly cheap and unskilled labor. Second, the Cuban economic enclave has an effect of permeability within the local labor market offering immigrant women the opportunity to incorporate them into the local labor market in a relative fast and easy way. However, in the case of the ethnic market, the Cuban socio-
economic enclave comes short in its role as sponsor and facilitator within the local economy. The Cuban enclave does not fully endorse the ethnic market as a significant economic institution because of its minimal production and insignificant surplus value. Therefore, immigrant women participating in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* do not enjoy the enclave’s sponsorship as others involved in different economic activities do. They end up isolated and entrapped in an alternative, incipient economic segment within the Cuban enclave, with few if any opportunities to move forward into broader economic ventures.

Differences among women participating in this case study reflect interactions among all operant variables within three major socio-economic elements of *class, gender and ethnicity*. Older married women with children tend to experience very limited spatial mobility. They enter the ethnic market looking for a permanent source of income.

Younger women without dependents enjoyed a greater spatial mobility and independence from the patriarchal family structure therefore they have access to better work conditions. For this group of women, the ethnic market is seen as a temporary source of income. Younger women see the ethnic market as a temporary source of extra income while they are in school. They aspire to higher goals by continuing their education before entering into a permanent entrepreneur venture.

One of the key findings of this case study is the importance that the enabling conditions have on these immigrant women livelihoods. Most studies put emphasis on the assets or the acquisition of business skills and access to financial capital. They fail to demonstrate the importance of enabling conditions such as spatial mobility, which is often a decisive factor in shaping women’s opportunities in economy strategy.
configuration. The knowledge of these women’s enabling conditions reveals the kind of opportunities to which immigrant women have access. Immigrant women need more than just financial capital and business skills to succeed in their entrepreneur venture. They need a whole socio-economic network infrastructure that determines the entering of the local labor market through ethnic niches. Social contacts and networking play a role as locator or identifier of ethnic economic niches in which these women can cluster.

Another constriction that these women face is the lack of adequate legal documentation to reside and hold a job in the U.S. Because these women have an unlawful immigration status (a great number of them had enter the U.S. without the required documents and visas), they become invisible to or illegible for government assistance or private micro credits.

### 6.4. Future Research

Although this research lacks statistical representation for the whole female immigrant population in South Florida, due to the size of the group of women interviewed this case study uses the ethnographic method of research that allows the possibility for comparative analysis. The findings of this work will produce a continued exploration of how the composition and outcome of female immigrant entrepreneurship is shaped by prior and existent socio-economic structures. These findings also can be used to develop a generalized framework for further studies of the socio-economic interrelationship among economic settings, gender, class, and ethnicity.

This case study shunts light into the immigrant women’s socio-economic experience in the ethnic market within an ethnic enclave as a socio-economic framework
modifier. However, much more research needs to be done on the ways in which immigrant women’s livelihood enabling conditions shape their economic opportunities. Several issues need to be addressed; the long term effect of these women’s participation on the ethnic market at the social and individual level, within the family structure, and within the society.

Immigrant women participating in The Redland Harvest Market Village have similar elements of comparison with women working in the exporting zones of Southeast Asia; Latin American immigrant women working in Los Angeles; and Mexican or Central American women working in the Maquiladora mass production economic model on the U.S. Mexican border. The socio-economic benefits obtained from their economic tasks are minimal. They face exploitation and marginalization from the mainstream economic sector. However, immigrant women in South Florida count in an extra element, the Cuban socio economic enclave, which plays a role of modifier and catalyst in the local labor market.
EPILOGUE TO THE CASE STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this epilogue is to revisit, the setting of this case study, *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. The goal is to explore and update the status of the women interviewed earlier in the study. During this post research, key questions were asked of the women previously studied. How many of those immigrant women who initially participated in the first set of interviews remain and continue working in the market either as employers or employees? What was the current socio-economic level of those remaining immigrant women, had it improved, stayed the same or declined? Had their assets and degrees of access within the community improved, stayed stable, or decreased? Had their role within the family circle improved, remained the same, or diminished with time? Were those women entrapped in an alternative, low productive economy or did they move up the labor market ladder? How did those women see themselves in relation to the market, their community, and their families? Were they satisfied with their present socio-economic status? Did they feel empowered and did they experience a sense of well-being?

As the final face of this case study, in 2008 a set of informal follow-up interviews and direct observations were conducted in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* with the same group of immigrant women, approached earlier in this research as knowledgeable informants. The purpose of this epilogue was to design a second inventory of their socio-
economic status. Subsequent to the early focus groups meetings, in-depth interviews, participant and direct observations, notes, data analysis, findings, and conclusions; a second set of data was needed so as to examine the lasting impact of these women’s participation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* had in their livelihoods after 5 years of the initial analysis. This new set of data was required to establish patterns of comparison with the first set of findings, obtained early on this study, as well as patterns of comparison with other studies elsewhere. This time around, informal interviews in the form of casual conversations were carried out with women who had been part of the first group of knowledge informants approached early in this research. During these informal talks, inquiries were posed about their current socio-economic state of affairs; changes on their role within their family circle and their bonds and contacts with the local community; their sense of well being and degree of empowerment; as well as their ability to create agency in order to act upon established gendered cultural traditions.

**Composite Picture of a Second Set of Interviews at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* Five Years After**

As a first step to the follow-up explorations, an account of the women selected earlier as knowledgeable informants needed to be made. A walk was taken through the market grounds to ascertain how many of those women first interviewed for this case study were still working at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. The next step was to approach these remaining women, reestablish contact with them, and initiate a new set of observations of their daily routine at the market. Five years after the initial explorations to *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, the physical grounds had expanded by fifty
percent. While the main building and the stands located at the storage buildings remained more or less the same, the location of the food stands changed and expanded. Several new food stands offering a wider variety of prepared meals had been added to that section. Across the food court, at the market’s west side, a greater number of new vendors had placed their merchandise in an empty field formerly used as parking space, without facilities or accommodations. That new set of merchants and the commodities they offered for sale were, in some way, different from the items sold at the market’s main buildings. This section of *The Redland Harvest Market Village* appeared to be operating merely on survival retailing activities in which vendors engaged in sales of second hand merchandize - used, over-stocked, or outdated items purchased earlier at storage rooms, yard sales or warehouses. They sold products for house cleaning and personal hygiene, used furniture, used electronics, used and new clothing, and used tools. It was evident that this part of the market operated within an even more informal structure that the rest of market. The rudimentary retailing was based on tax free sales with the usual price bargain. Within that configuration vendors sold whatever was legal to sell; they were just looking to generate an income that perhaps would help them make ends meet. Of the merchants’ gender configuration in this section of *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, the majority were immigrant women. Although, the ethnicity of this specific group of women kept similar patterns with the other female vendors around the market, it was evident there was a heavier presence of Caribbean women.

Out of the original group of 36 women approached at the beginning of this research; only 13 were still working at *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. Even though this group of 13 immigrant women did not represent the full set of the 36 women
interviewed earlier in this research nor represent the whole South Florida immigrant population, the data collected still had fundamental elements of analysis. Categories of age, marital status, and number of children, educational level, household income, employment status, household composition and place of origin exhibited patterns of association with the study’s first set of findings as well as with the results of previous studies elsewhere. In order to determine the lasting impact of the women’s participation in *The Redland Harvest Market Village* upon their livelihoods, it is necessary to examine the correlations among variables such as age, educational level, and income; marital status, employment status, and number of children as related to income; household composition as related to income; and educational level, place of origin, and income.

Six of these women came from the Caribbean region; four came from Mexico; two from South America; and one from Central America. This group of immigrant women showed more elements of homogeny than the original group of 36 women; categories of age, marital status, household composition, and educational level were very similar among them. Eleven of the women were older than 40 years of age. Eight of the women were either head of their household with children or dependents of their extended family. None of the women had ever participated in college education and only one remained single with no dependents. The total income generated by the economic activities performed by these women at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* did not undergo any major changes during the past five years. Their small business remained rudimentary, with very low productivity and a minimal financial output.

Through examining each one of these women’s establishments only one was found to have experienced noticeable gains, a South American woman from Colombia.
A petite woman with a friendly disposition, she was 79 years old at the time of this study’s first set of interviews. Her business was located at the main building, the same location as five years earlier. She sold children’s gowns, suits, and accessories for baptisms, first communions, and weddings. Her business had experienced a perceptible growth; she had rented two more adjacent stands. She has hired additional help, her sister and another female relative, to give her a hand on garment manufacture and costumer assistance. As mentioned earlier in this study (see chap. IV, table1, interview #9), she herself manufactured all the garments and accessories sold. In spite of her evident accomplishment, she complained of low sales and the closing of many stands around the building. She also explained that due to the crisis of the global economy her sales have been adversely affected. Her fancy children garments were no longer in high demand as they had been in the past. At home, her state of affairs remained unchanged through the years. The market’s small income provided her with financial independence and empowered her in decision making, allowed her to experience a sense of well-being. However, her links with the community had not improved. Her interaction with mainstream society stayed nominal, keeping her isolated from it.

Among these 13 immigrant women, four of them were married. Although their husbands were considered the household’s main breadwinner, the women’s small market income was a key source of their family financial support. This group of married and single women head of households looked to the market’s occupations for a permanent way to generate required income to help satisfy their family’s consumption needs. They felt obligated to continue working at the market because of moral and legal duties toward their children or dependents. From the original group selected as knowledgeable
informants, the remaining subset of women working at the market was older and less educated. Five years following the preliminary visits to *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, its state of affairs was no different than before. Due to its informal nature, simple operation, and low productivity, *The Redland Harvest Market Village* has remained without links to the local formal economy. The market’s small entrepreneurs and employees, each performing retailing activities within it, remained isolated from the mainstream economy. None of the women’s businesses approached in the second set of explorations had direct contacts or links with the local formal economy. Therefore, it was evident that it would be tremendously difficult for any sort of upper entrepreneurial mobility. *The Redland Harvest Market Village* kept them entrapped in a kind of rudimentary alternative economy where the possible benefits of the local Cuban economic enclave did not reach them. Together, these women’s assets and the market’s contextual attributes did not allow these women to elevate to higher levels of livelihoods. All of these women found themselves immersed in a set of circumstances where they performed simple retail activities in order to generate an income that, in combination with other informal activities in the private sector, would allow them and their family to merely sustain a survival level of consumption rather than an average income or accumulation of wealth.

The immigrant women that chose to remain engaged in economic activities at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* experienced an unchanging set of circumstances between the first interviews and the later visits. Examining and comparing data collected in earlier and later interviews it was obvious that their livelihoods did not suffer deteriorations or major improvements. These women found in the market a place to work
and generate an income despite their sharp limitations such as immigration status, age, language proficiency, spatial mobility, skills, and educational level. They felt welcome at the market where they could not only produce a small income but they had the opportunity to interact with their counterparts. In return the ethnic market, t, embraced these women as a pool of cheap labor, undemanding and willing to work under unfavorable conditions. This ethnic market clearly exhibited lack of an organized design to allow these women to make a transition from an informal, marginal economic setting to a wider formal entrepreneur venture. Without virtually any direct links to the local formal economic sector, *The Redland Harvest Market Village* was not able to facilitate any labor shift to the traditional sector. These 13 women continued participating in the market economic operations without further reassurance of a future incorporation into the main stream economy.

Between the initial explorations and the last visits to *The Redland Harvest Market Village*, the livelihoods of women involved in this research had experienced alterations in several accounts. Although their group of assets had remained almost unchanged; these women had gained certain degree of agency and empowerment due not only to their nominal financial autonomy, but to their ability of act upon gendered situations and their participation in the socialization process taking place at the market. These women’s self-view had experienced a tremendous transformation that, although one cannot measure it by statistic tools, it can be perceived by ethnographic techniques applied throughout this investigation. Their participation at the markets economic activities facilitated the rupture of an unbreakable patriarchal family structure. These 13 women were able to raise themselves from behind their husband’s shadow and consider themselves active
independent individuals. Within their family circle, the rigid patriarchal structure of years past had flexed its grip; given room to a more relaxed arrangement where women, still under their husband’s watch eye, had voice and vote in daily decisions. At the market they considered themselves active agents able to conduct business transactions, relate to costumers, and establish social rapport with their counterparts. They were reliable sources of ethnic support; and they themselves became social networks for new members of the local ethnic community.

Due to the global economic recession and national economic downturn, The Redland Harvest Market Village’s retailing operations followed an irregular pattern. Sales declined sharply in some sections where non-basic merchandize were sold like jewelry and music, but at the same time was evident an increase on the demand for items such as used clothing, used furniture, and second hand electronics. Lots of empty stands were found in the market’s main building and the warehouse’s stands. The main building, where most of the established vendors were located, was one of the more affected areas. Among the vendors, very few new faces were found and a lot of familiar faces were gone. As an informal economic establishment, The Redland Harvest Market Village has continued performing as a functional body within the local economy. It provides occupations for a group of low skilled female immigrants that otherwise would have to relay upon patronizing occupations on private homes, marginal local firms, street vendors, or work at home assignments. The ethnic market allows them to generate a minimal income which helps alleviate their family’s needs and, to a certain degree. The market operates as a training field where women participating on it acquire some retailing skills. However The Redland Harvest Market Village fails to ensure women a transition
to wider, stable and more profitable enterprises. The 13 women that chose to remain participants in the market found themselves in a comparable set of circumstances as five years prior. They were entrapped within a rudimentary economic structure without room for upper economic mobility and continued to be isolated from the mainstream economy. Although, these women had experienced alterations in their favor within their family circle, as well as gains in their self-esteem and sense of well-being, their incorporation into the host society and enhancement of their status quo had not yet materialized.

In analyzing the new data collected on this small group of women, several significant issues came to light. Within this group of women, the most evident point of similarity among them is the age category. The mean for the age distribution is 49 years. Clearly the majority of these women were middle age and older; they were the ones that had further invested human and financial capital into their enterprises or occupations at the market. None of these women remaining at the market had been involved in college education. They needed their economic activities at The Redland Harvest Market Villages to be both permanent and stable. However, due to the fact that the women’s cluster of assets was very limited and their degree of access to the mainstream socio-economic structure was narrow, they remained isolated and restrained within a deficient economic configuration. The number of children and dependents under their care also became heavy-weight elements that limited these women’s capability of spatial mobility. Except for the youngest member of this distribution, 16 years old, at the time of the first interview, (see Appendices, woman 5) all these women had dependents or kids within their immediate family circle (see chapter IV, table 1). With one or two exceptions, these
women had not mastered the official language which in turn became a major obstacle in establishing direct engagement with the local socio-economic community.

Among this group of thirteen women; 6 women came from the Caribbean region (Haiti and Cuba); 4 women came from North America (Mexico); 1 woman came from Central America (Honduras); and 2 women came from South America (Colombia and Chile). Surprisingly, the majority of the clientele that frequently visits this market is from Mexican and Central American regions, whereas the majority of the vendors often came from the Caribbean region.

Upper socio-economic mobility proved to be very unlikely for these women due to their individual group of assets and their limited access to the main stream community. Their age, lack of suitable financial capital, language deficiency, dependents and children under their care, poor social net working, schooling, unskilled work experience, immigration status, and spatial mobility have kept these women in a state of socio-economic entrapment within the local community. The degree of spatial mobility in these women’s livelihoods as well as their immigration status became critical elements that shaped their current and future state of affairs both as individuals and as members of the South Florida Community. Limited spatial mobility and illegal immigration status represent major barriers faced by immigrant women in the United States. Unable to transit about and travel outside the ethnic clusters these women remain isolated and restricted. Lack of the adequate documentation for residency and work in the U.S., leaves these women vulnerable to labor exploitation and outside the limits of governmental protection and financial assistance.
Prospects of The Redland Harvest Market Village’s Immigrant Women

In order to evaluate these women’s level of enhancement in terms of their degree of empowerment and their sense of well-being after entering The Redland Harvest Market Village, it was necessary to take into account several variables. Economic growth and income index may not be the only appropriate measures to use due to gender discrimination and patriarchal restrictions that these women experienced in their livelihood configurations. Economic growth and income may not benefit women in the same way as men (Acosta-Belén and Bose, 1990; Benería, 1987; Bolles, 1988; Boserup, 1970; Sen, Gita, & Grown, 1987). A focus on capabilities rather than solely on financial independence can specifically address the different dimensions that contribute to women’s empowerment and sense of well-being. Did the Redland Harvest Market Village allow these women’s capabilities to develop into a stage of agency in order to achieve their full potential as expressed in their functionings? Did their performance in The Redland Harvest Market Village provide them with the ability to remove or lessen gender constraints in their livelihoods and thus enjoy freedom, voice and individual autonomy? Did The Redland Harvest Market Village facilitate the satisfaction of these basic needs in their livelihoods with the full development of their capabilities?

The Redland Harvest Market Village provided these immigrant women with an opportunity to enter the local labor market in a relative effortless manner, in spite of their limited set of assets. However, immigrant women did not benefit at a grand scale from this interrelationship. The gains obtained from their participation in The Redland Harvest Market Village did not represent a substantial permanent increase of their autonomy, decision making power-making and sense of well-being within their livelihood
configurations. Due to these women’s small financial input into their household income, their male counterpart, when present, was still considered the main breadwinner, therefore he held the privileged power position within the family circle. Women participating at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* endured poor working conditions. They worked without any type of legal or governmental protection, health benefits, work compensations, and with questionable health and security issues. Their group of assets did not experience a major beneficial transformation and their access to the mainstream community was still very limited. Their degree of spatial mobility was below the average level which left them isolated and unable to integrate themselves into wider socio-economic ventures beyond the market. They were unable to accumulate any type of wealth while working at the market. Due to the minimal income generated from the market these women had to combine market retailing activities with additional part-time occupations in the service sector such as nannies, housekeepers, or caregivers for elderly or ill individuals. Immigrant women engaged in economic activities at *The Redland Harvest Market Village* did not experience enduring beneficial alterations in their livelihoods configurations. Their socio-economic status remained the same as it was five earlier. These immigrant women were still perceived as low-skilled cheap labor - outsiders willing to work under meager circumstances- and gendered constrictions. Their set of social networks and contacts were allocated, as before, within their cluster of counterparts. Their ability to locate paid work outside their home, provide family care, and enjoy leisure time was determined by gendered constrictions and cultural traditions.

The concepts of thesis of integration, thesis of marginalization and thesis of exploitation, as pointed out by Susan Tiano (Benería, 2003; Feldman, 1992; Ong, 1987;
Tiano, 1986), are useful in explaining women’s incorporation process into the labor market and the impact on their livelihoods. The Redland Harvest Market provided these women with the opportunity of incorporation into the local labor market in spite of their limited assets. However, the ethnic market also allowed labor exploitation and marginalization of these immigrant women and the perpetuation of a gendered mode of production in which immigrant women are typecast as dependant of the male migrant worker. Women are paid less as waged workers and regarded as help or an unpaid family worker.

Entrepreneurial success is dependent on a blend of cultural and structural elements, as well as individual entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, a precondition for immigrant women’s entrepreneurship accomplishment at The Redland Harvest Market Village is the development of policies that could support both impending and existing women entrepreneurs. Against the prevailing elements of social configuration, cultural constrictions and a limited cluster of personal assets, it is crucial to build up and support projects aimed at immigrant women who show potential for entrepreneurial pursuits, and to engage those immigrant women in need of socio economic empowerment. Although immigrant women’s ventures outside the home have more recently been accepted as benefiting women and improving their standard of living, a remarkable transformation in cultural traditions and patriarchal family structuring will not arrive quickly or effortlessly.

The local South Florida economy as the epicenter of the Cuban economic enclave benefits from the immediate availability of an immigrant labor force. In return the local ethnic economic enclave offers the immigrant labor force relatively easy access to the labor market. Immigrant women’s limited access to job opportunities, local labor market
disadvantages, racial stereotypes, and narrow set of assets channel them toward the ethnic markets as immigrant women becomes an overrepresentation in the informal and small business sectors. The Cuban economic enclave proves to be more advantageous to Cuban counterparts than any other immigrant group resident in Miami. Immigrant women that opted for the ethnic market as a source of income did not necessary profited directly from the ‘cushion effect’ of the local ethnic enclave. They found themselves performing within a rudimentary retailing establishment generating a very low output production. The ethnic market does not represent an attractive enterprise venture for Cuban immigrants because of its low productivity, minimal income generation, and little opportunity for upper mobility.

Research and analysis by both government agencies and NGOs is necessary in order to identify the socio-economic profile, individualities, and entrepreneurial performance of immigrant women in the ethnic market. The results can contribute to resolution and policy-making and grant greater visibility for immigrant women entrepreneurship. Self-sustaining micro-financing should be further developed and extended; partnerships with government agencies and international organizations; and explorations conducted with the purpose of being design models for financing proposals specifically aimed at immigrant women’s entrepreneurship. More representation of women in decision-making positions in government, NGOs, and financial institutions would, without a doubt, uphold change and help in the gender-sensitization process needed to make socio-economic support readily available for female entrepreneurship. Central to the government’s goal should be to empower women with the basics of gender equality and to ensure the women’s presence in the state structure as well as raising
awareness of women rights in society. In order to develop immigrant women’s capabilities in business, it is crucial to identify the different needs that immigrant women have in the set up and maintenance of their enterprises and foster sustainable business development as well as raise the visibility of immigrant women’s entrepreneurship. Accessible and inexpensive training in retailing skills and management designs should be planned and synchronized by institutions and organizations related to immigrant women’s needs. Two specific women’s needs are flexibility and spatial mobility. Women have the double burden of home and outside responsibilities. Flexibility and spatial mobility are key elements in women’s participation in training sections.

Further development and expansion of immigrant women’s entrepreneurship depends also on their social contacts and networking systems. Immigrant women often carry out business within their ‘familiar circle’ relying on family, friends, and counterparts to get information about new ethnic niches, suppliers, technology, and costs. However, a market’s globalization with competition internally and abroad, and increasing market liberalization call for the need to be part of an extended networking system. Visibility is also vital in immigrant women’s degree of success in their entrepreneur ventures. The rising number of immigrant women entrepreneurs in the ethnic market eventually will translate into terms of equal participation; leadership in the business sector; and a major contribution towards sustained economic development. In order to accelerate women entrepreneurs’ visibility, it is essential for government to make certain women have a presence in key senior positions. This will ensure feminine views are valuable and feminine voices are heard.
REFERENCES


U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.


Focus Groups Survey (English).

This survey has as subject matter of research immigrant women working in the South Florida ethnic market. *The Redland Harvest Market Village* located in South Dade County, Florida as a Case Study.

This Focus groups exercise will be used as a first attempt to create a link between the researcher and the informant. The data collected here will be an initial inventory of these women’s views and attitudes toward their role as immigrants in The United States. Focus groups will be used as an introduction to ”break the ice”. A simple sketch in order to give these women the opportunity to express their general opinions about themselves as individual and within their family.

Graphs:

1. *In the pyramid below place yourself according to the importance of the role played by you, as a woman, in your family.*

   *Base: least important*

   *Top: most important*
Who is at the top? Why?

Who is at the Bottom? Why?

2. Another visual analysis

Present to the group the category of “immigrant women” and let them express their own opinion about what could be the causes or reasons that motivated them to leave their own country and so, the impacts or effects that migration have on their lives.
Use of open-ended questions with the help of the “seven helpers”:

What did make you emigrate outside your country?

When did you decide to leave?

To where did you immigrate first?

Who did influence you to emigrate?

How did you feel when you left your country of origin?

How much effort did it take you to move to the new country?

What did you find in the host country?

How did you feel in the new place of residence?

How was your level of life affected by your change of residence?

How were your personal, financial opportunities affected by your change of residence?

Demographic data (English).

Individual questions.

Place of birth:

Date of birth:

Marital status:

Single  Married  Never married  Separated  Widow

Divorced  Living with someone.
Education level:
Elementary     High School     College     Graduate studies

Household composition:
Both parents and kids     Single parent and kids

Marital status before immigrating to the U.S.
Single     Married     Never married     Separated     Widow
Divorced     Living with some one

How long have you live in the U.S.?
1-5 years     5-10 years     10-20 years     20-up years

Do you work?
Yes     No     Sometimes.

Full time     Part time

Actual occupation:
Employed     Self-employed     Housewife     Other

Place or places of employment:
Your annual income:
$ 5,000-10,000 10,000-15,000 15,000-20,000 20,000-up

Any other additional incomes in the household:
1,000-5,000 5,000-10,000 10,000-15,000 15,000-20,000 20,000-up

Source of the additional income:

Different occupations that you have had since you came to the U.S.?

In–Depth Interview

Open-ended questions.

Has your income improved throughout the different occupations that you have since entering the U.S.?

Why did you choose to immigrate to the U.S.?

Why did you choose South Florida as your new place of residence?

How do you feel to be an immigrant woman in South Florida?

What are your hopes for the future?
Personal:

Financial:

What are your major concerns?

Personal:

Financial:

Are you better off financially now than before leaving your country of origin?

Do you have more decision making power in your family now than before?

Yes   No   Same

What meaning does the start of a new life here have for you?

Did you want to leave your country of origin?

Yes   No   No Opinion

Did you come here as wife, mother, daughter, and sister or of your free will?

How long have you been at the present occupation?

1-5 years   5-10 years   10-20 years   20-up years
Are there any family members or relatives working for you in your establishment?

Yes   No

How often have they been work for you?

All the time  Sometimes  Seldom

Are these persons paid?

Yes  No  Most of the time  Sometimes

What proportion of your earnings do you invest in your family welfare?

All  Most  Half  Less than half  None

What proportion of your earnings does your husband/partner invest in your family welfare?

All  Most  Half  Less than half  None

How important are the ethnic market earnings in the overall economic survival of your household?

Very important  Just important  No important

How does your family influence your performance in your job or business?

Support  Neutral  Constrain
Do you like to share your time between house duties and paid work outside home?
Yes No

How often does your husband share housework activities with you?
All the time Sometimes Never

Do you feel that you have a set of double duties with homemaker work and your job outside your home?
Yes No

How do you identify yourself as?
Entrepreneur Worker Home-Maker

Questionario
Focus Groups Survey (Spanish).

A manera de introduccion:

En la pyramid presentada coloquese Ud., de acuerdo a su lugar de importancia dentro del marco familiar. Considerando la base el punto de menos importancia y la cima el punto mas importante.
¿Quién está en la cima? ¿Porqué?

¿Quién está en la base? ¿Porqué?

De acuerdo a su propia experiencia llene el siguiente grafico. Colocándose Ud., en el centro, las causas por las que emigró a su izquierda y los efectos que esta emigración han tenido en su vida a su derecha.

Causas

resultados

Preguntas libres.

¿Qué?

¿Por qué?

¿Cuándo?

¿Dónde?

¿Quién?

¿Cómo?

¿Cuánto?

Datos Demográficos (Spanish)

¿Lugar de nacimiento?
¿Fecha de nacimiento?

¿Estado civil?

Casada soltera separada viuda divorciada conviviendo con algien.

¿Nivel de educacion?

Primaria secundaria Universitaria estudios superiores.

¿Composición familiar?

Ambos padres y hijos la madre e hijos

¿Estado civil antes de emigrar?

Soltera Casada Separada Viuda

Divorciada Coviviendo con algien.

¿Cuantos tiempo ha vivido en Los Estados Unidos?

1-5 años 5-10 años 10-20 años 20--años

¿Esta empleada en la actualidad?

Si No

¿Ocupacion Actual?

Empleada empleada por cuenta propia ama de casa otra.
¿Cúantas horas a la semana trabaja Ud.?

¿Lugar o lugares de trabajo?

¿Salario annual?
$ 5,000-10,000 $10,000-15,000 $15,000-20,000 $20,000-up

¿Salarios adicionales en la familia?
$5,000-10,000 $10,000-15,000 $15,000-20,000 $20,000-up

¿Cual era su ocupacion o ocupaciones en su pais natal?

¿Diferentes ocupaciones que ha tenido desde que llego a Los Estados Unidos?

In-Depth interview (Spanish)

Open End Questions

¿Ha mejorado su salario, teniendo en cuenta las diferentes ocupaciones que ha tenido desde que entró a Los Estados Unidos?

¿Por qué escogió Los Estados Unidos para emigrar?

¿Por qué escogió el Sur de la Florida como su lugar de residencia?
¿Cómo se siente ser una mujer emigrante en el Sur de la Florida?

¿Cúales son sus esperanzas personales y aspiraciones comerciales para el futuro?
Personales:
Financieras:

¿Cúales son sus mayores preocupaciones para el futuro?
Personales:
Financieras:

¿Cómo es su nivel de vida desde el punto de vista económico, ahora qué vive fuera de su país natal?

¿Se siente con más poder de decisión dentro de su familia ahora que cuando vivía en su país natal?

¿Ha sido afectada su posición dentro del marco familiar al entrar en una cultura totalmente nueva?

¿Qué significado tiene el haber empezado una nueva vida en éste país para Ud.?
¿Ud., Querías emigrar?
¿Cómo vinó a Los Estados Unidos; como esposa, como madre, como hija, como hermana, o por cuenta propia?

¿Cuánto tiempo tiene trabajando en su presente ocupación?
1-5 años  
5-10 años  
10-20 años  
20-up años

¿Se encuentran miembro/miembros de su familia trabajando para Ud. en su establecimiento?
Si  
No

¿Con cuánta frecuencia esta persona/personas trabaja para Ud.?
Todo el tiempo  
De vez en cuando  
Muy rara vez

¿Esta persona/personas recibe un salario?
Si  
No  
Casi siempre  
Algunas veces

¿Qué cantidad de su salario Ud., invierte en beneficio de su familia?
Todo  
Casi todo  
La mitad  
Menos de la mitad  
Nada

¿Cuál es la importancia del salario ganado en The Redland Harvest Market Village para el sustento de su familia?
Muy importante  
De mediana importancia  
Poca importancia
Qué piensa su familia de su trabajo fuera del hogar?

De acuerdo    No le importa    En desacuerdo

¿Esta Ud., de acuerdo con compartir su tiempo entre sus labores hogareñas y su trabajo asalariado fuera de su casa?

Sí    No

¿Con cuánta frecuencia su esposo comparte con Ud., las labores hogareñas?

Todo el tiempo    Algunas veces    Nunca

¿Cree Ud., que existe una doble responsabilidad de labores en el hogar y empleo fuera del hogar para una mujer?

Sí    No

Como se identifica Ud., en el mercado laboral?

Empresaria de pequeña industria    Trabajadora    ama de casa

Data Collected During In-Depth Interviews

First Group of Interviews

1st interview

This Woman comes from Haiti. This lady sells household supplies such as china, silverware, tablecloths and cosmetics such as deodorant, shaving cream, cologne, etc.
She came to South Florida after living for a while in Chicago. She prefers South Florida because of the warmer weather, which it is more similar to her homeland than the Chicago’s cooler temperatures.

When she was living in Haiti, she used to do a lot of traveling around the Caribbean, South Florida as well as South America selling clothing and personal hygiene products. She said that as she got older, she stopped traveling and established herself in Miami. She claims that she misses that life style a lot. She considers that she was better off financially at the time when she was in Haiti because her life was a lot simpler with fewer expenses and financially uncomplicated. She considers life in the U.S. complicated and harder, with lots of bills to pay and too many issues to take care off.

She is seriously considering going back to school, perhaps at Miami Dade Community College because she has come to the conclusion that without education she will not be able to upgrade her opportunities in the job market. If she gets a two years college degree she plans to open her own beauty salon and stop working on retailing.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

This lady continues selling the same type of products at her stand. However, she has improved it since the last interview. Now she sells beauty products as well as cleaning supplies in a wider range of brands. She is attending at training school. She still plans to open her own beauty salon.
This lady is originally from Mexico. She sells music c.d. records, cassettes, jewels and clothing. She is an older woman with 12 adult children, and several grand children. All of her children, except for one living in Mexico, are living here in South Florida. She is a widow; her husband came to the U.S. as member of the braceros program to work in the fields collecting different crops.

According to this lady, her husband developed cancer in his throat as a consequence of years of exposure to toxic chemicals that are ingredients in pesticides used in the cropping of strawberries.

She also referred of many cases of workers that felt ill as her husband did as a result of the pesticides used in the cropping process. She regrets the fact that never requested legal advice to examine her husband’s case because and filled for financial compensation. Since she is illiterate in both English and Spanish, she is aware of her limitations in communicating with lawyers and government officials to peruse her case. In spite of all her minimal skills, she sees herself as a very ambitious person; she points out her need for self-improvement and for the up grade of her small business. She wants to upgrade her business into a bigger and diverse one where her family can find a more stable source of income.

Follow Up a Year Later.

She continues selling the same type of merchandise in the market at the same location. At her stand she offers her costumers a variety of folk music and jewels. Her children seem to be more involved in her business this time around. A good number of
people visit her stand but sells are not great. However, she seems content with her business.

3rd interview

This lady is originally from Cuba. She is very cooperative and out spoken person. She and her late husband used to own a shop in Cuba. She remembers how she used to travel around the Caribbean before settling in South Florida.

She rents a small stand at *The Redland Market Village* where she sells garments supplies such as lace, threat, needles and also she offers tablecloths and crafts supplies.

This lady considers herself personal and financial independent. She says that she wants to remain single because she sees herself as self-sufficient and in not need of a partner or husband that in her opinion will complicate her life in her senior years.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is still working at the market. She thinks that the market offer her a relative comfortable way to generate some income to get by.

4th interview

This lady came originally from Cuba. Back in Cuba she attended college education. She spoke in a very articulate way about her feelings toward her country’s government. She was very cooperative during the interview and she was willing to talk about her experiences here and back in Cuba.
She is a single woman that lives with her pets. She is an employee at the pet store in the market, where, she sells birds, and a large variety of pet supplies. This lady seems to feel very comfortable with her personal and financial situation.

Follow Up a Year Later

The pet store moved from its former location to the basement in the main building (building A). At this new location the store has lots physical space therefore it seems to me that it had been improved to a bigger and better business. The employee that I interviewed a year ago is still there working in the floor assisting the costumers and the animals.

5th interview

This lady came from Haiti. She is a very shy person and has a lack of English language knowledge. Her daughter which was present at the time of the interview had to translate to her from Creole to English and from English to Creole.

She has a stand at the market where she sells children’s garments as well as adult’s clothing.

She was very cooperative during the time of the interview considering that she could not communicate with neither in English or Spanish.

She seems to be pretty well adjusted to the South Florida community taken in consideration that she has serious limitations of language that keep her trapped within a small circle of people and makes her dependent on another Creole speaking person to communicate to others.
Follow Up a Year Later

She remains at the market working at the same stand. Her English has become a little more fluently and she seems to grow to be more receptive to her customers.

6th interview

This lady is originally from Haiti. She has a very limited knowledge of English and or Spanish. However, she has her own little business.

She was a little shy but at the same time she was willing to participate in the interview and answered all the questions about her personal experiences.

She is very happy to be here in the States.

She sells household products and cleaning products. It seems that in spite of her great limitations she has had a quick and relatively easy entrance in the South Florida labor market through informal avenues as this ethnic market.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is still working at her stand, selling the same type of supplies. She seems to be doing fine.

7th interview

This is a very young woman that came from Argentina escaping the economic crisis at home. She came to the U.S. looking for better economic opportunities and a chance to improve her level of living.

She works in two different jobs. However, she earns very little money.
She feels content to be in The States considering her limitations because at least she has some income coming in.

During the weekends she works for a group of people that have several clothing stands around the market. In the week days she works at a clothing warehouse at Kendall. She lives with her brother but she seems to be a little nostalgic and isolated.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She went to work at a different cloth stand within the market. She is attending English classes at night school; this has helped her to improve her language limitations. She is trying to get a better job with the help of her friends.

**8th interview**

This lady is originally from Chile. Originally, she and her husband came to The U.S. as a tourist during her honeymoon and not in search of a living (she said that her intentions were to enjoy her newlywed status, side see around Miami and return to Chile). Once here, her and her husband run out of money fast so they decided to stay and earn some money and latter on go back to Chile.

Initially she worked at add jobs such as cleaning houses, she said that this was a way to make up for the honeymoon expenses.

Today, she and her husband own a little shop at the market where they sell shoes, sneakers, and house shoes.

She works in the weekends at the market in her little stand and she continues cleaning private residences during the weekdays.
**Follow Up a Year Later.**

She is still working at the market along with her husband in the same type of business. She has kept the same location, she sells the same merchandise, and keeps the same size stand. She is doing fine.

**9th interview**

This lady is originally from Colombia. She is an older lady. She sells infants’ and children’s clothing and accessories.

She said that she immigrated on her own will to the States in search of a better income to support her family (parents, brothers and sisters) back home in Colombia.

Initially, when she arrived at the US she went to live to Chicago where she got married. There she worked in clothing factories and as a cleaning lady in Private homes.

Later on she decided to move to Miami, where she settled herself and start her own small business. She is a very talk active person and she was eager to answer each question during this interview adding to each one of them a piece of history of her life experiences as an immigrant woman trying to survive in the U.S. At the market she sells children’s fancy dresses for special occasions such as weddings, baptisms, first communions. She owns two stands side by side in the building A.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She is at the same location selling the same type of merchandise. Her business is the same size. She is doing fine.
10th interview

This lady is a special case because she is a second-generation immigrant and an migrant within The U.S.

She sells harvest products in a stand at the market.

She is very cooperative and she was very friendly during the interview. She was born in Indiana to Mexican parents.

She came to South Florida for two main reasons. First, because of South Florida’s warm weather and second, because of South Florida Cuban economic enclave, South Florida’s labor market demand for labor offers her and her family better economic opportunities. They can enter the labor market easily and faster than in most regions in the U. S. In addition she has a lot of advantages here in South Florida being from Hispanic background and speaking Spanish fluently.

Her business is a family affair because her kids and her relatives share the retailing responsibilities.

Follow Up a Year Later

She continues in the same working at the market selling the same type of harvest products. Her stand is busy most of the time. Costumers browse through the vegetables and fruits that she offers to them. She still has two or three relative employees helping her with the sales.
**11th interview**

This Lady is originally from Mexico. She sells harvest vegetables, fruits, spices, and eggs.

This interview was kind of difficult to do because she would not answer any of the questions without her husband’s approval. Her husband controlled every one of her answers. Her husband was against her answering any kind of questions related to income, dates of arrival to The States and even her date of birth.

He was very much suspicious and reluctant to give in any personal information. He was afraid the information proportioned for his wife could somehow be use against them. He stated that their business was operating within legal limits. Also he claimed that if his wife disclosed her birth date someone could access her bank account or her credit history.

This lady seems to be totally under her husband rule when it comes to any decision-making situation.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She continues working at the same location selling the same commodities. She is still at her harvest products stand, which is, as it was a year ago, one of the most visited by the market’s costumers. Her husband still has the dominant role in the business. She kept the same number of employees observed in my first visit to her stand (two or three ladies).
12th interview

This lady is originally from El Salvador. She and her husband have a fruits and vegetables stand in The Redland Harvest Market Village. The whole family, wife, husband, daughter and son, usually shares shores and sells products at the stand. She, as well as her husband, were very cooperative throughout the interview and happy to answer all the questions.

Initially she arrived in Texas where she worked in sweatshops and nurseries. For a while, she worked with a group of migrant workers collecting different types of harvests through the South West and South East U.S. Later on, she came to South Florida where she established residence with her husband and children.

She feels good in South Florida considering her limitations with the official language and her lack of social interaction with any English speaking person.

Follow Up a Year Later

She, along with her family, moved to a new space within the market. Her stand is a lot bigger, more organized, and they offer a wider variety of harvest products. In general, her business has improved a lot from the time of the first interview.

13th interview

This lady came originally from Hidalgo, Mexico. She came to The States as a migrant worker. She used to work as a pat time aid in nurseries, crop picker at different fields and sweat shops along the U.S. and Mexican border.
She came to South Florida and established residence here along with her husband and two kids.

At the market, she attends one of the nurseries where she sells a variety of plants and garden supplies. She works here during the weekend. In weekdays she attends plants at a different nursery and at her home.

She is a very friendly and cooperative. She seems to be well adjusted to South Florida considering her limitation with the official language.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She continues working at the same location in *The Redland Harvest Market Village*. A good number of people visit her stand to purchase plants. She is content with her current personal and financial situation. Because of South Florida warm weather she sells all year around, providing her with a small steady income.

**14th interview**

This lady is from Guatemala. She has a stand in the market where she sells clothing and handbags.

She was very friendly and receptive to the interview. Her husband did volunteer himself to introduce his wife and persuaded her to take part of this research.

In spite of her limited education this lady and her husband showed an open mind attitude toward the issues exposed by some of the questions during the interview. She openly expressed her opinions about patriarchal society, machismo and the invisibility of the women’s work. She seemed to have great understanding of gendered constrictions
effects of cultural norms and traditions have in women’s livelihoods. She is a deeply religious woman.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She is no longer selling garments and purses at the market. She is working from her home and sold her business to a Hispanic man.

**15th interview**

This lady comes from Argentina. She came to The States running from the economic crisis back home.

In Argentina, she earned a college degree in the field of psychology; she is a psycho-therapist. Because of Argentina’s national socio-economic crises, she could not find a job in there. She decided to immigrate to the U.S., searching for a better life and a source of income for her and her mother who stayed back home.

She realizes that if she does not speak English, her chances of getting a job that is right for her training are minimal, so she is planning taking some night classes in the adult education program.

She will love to re-certify her degree here in The U.S. in order to get a job in the health sector.

At the moment she is employed at the market selling clothing. She works 56 hours per week. At the time of the interview she had been in The U.S. only for a month. She is a very friendly and cooperative person however, considering the circumstances she seems to be a little disoriented.
Follow Up a Year Later

She is still at the market selling t-shirts. She told me that she is taking English language classes at night. She is hopping to find a better job soon, she has some places in mind such as Orlando, Florida, where she believes. She wants to apply for a job at the Disney’s Studios in Orlando, where she can get a higher pay.

16th interview

This lady came originally from Mexico. She is an older lady that has a jewel stand at The Redland Harvest Market Village. She came to the states after she got divorced in her country. She came to the U.S. in search of better opportunities and to start a new life. Here, she reunited with her sister and got remarried. She worked for a while in clothing factories and jewel shops.

At her stand she sells and repair jewels along with her partner. This woman was very pleasant and cooperative during the interview.

She feels a little isolated here because she does not have direct contact with U.S. nationals and she can not speak English well enough to interact easily within the local community.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is still working at the same location, selling and repairing jewel along with her partner.
17th interview

This lady came originally from El Salvador. She is a young woman that works part time at her mother’s jewel stand in the market.

She also works part time at a drug store.

She attends classes at Miami Dade Community College.

Her parents brought her here from El Salvador, escaping the country’s civil war and economic problems.

She feels happy here and plans to continue studies into masters and then to establish her own business.

Follow Up a Year Later

She continues to help her mother part time at the market. At the same time she is attending College courses.

18th interview

This lady comes from Colombia. She is very old fashion in her believes and principles. Also she is a deeply religious woman. She came to the states in search of more economic opportunities and trying to reach her personal goals. Here she lived with her brother for a while. Later on, she met a Cuban man and got married. They have young a daughter.

At the time of this first interview, she has an ethnic food stand at the market where she sells and prepares a variety of Latin-American plates. She also sells balloons and paints faces.
She feels a little nostalgic because she left her mother back home. Her knowledge of the English language is non-existent so she feels isolated from the mainstream culture.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She is not longer working at the market. I noticed that a little bit before a year after the first interview, she closed her stand and left the market.

**19th interview**

This lady comes from Mexico. She is a young woman that came to the States through Texas. Since her parents were living in South Florida, she established herself here; she worked in plant nurseries and sales part time while attending high school. She met a guy drop out of high school and started a family. Today, she has two kids.

She does not sound so happy to be working in her the little Mexican food stand that her and her husband (partner) have at the market. She whishes go back to school and get a degree in order to work in a different field other than restaurant business.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

During the year following the first interview, their business appeared to grow. However, a little be shy of a year period after the first interview their food stand is not longer at the market.
20th interview

This lady came originally from Cuba. She sells shoes at a stand that her mother owns in the market.

She is a young woman, married but without children. Her works just part time, she says to be doing this job just for the time being, because her goal is to become a legal secretary. She sees her current job as a survival economic activity and a fast and easy source of income.

She is fluently in Spanish and English so she does not feel isolated. However, she says that when she just arrived to The States she felt a little uncomfortable and it took some time to get use to the new environment.

Her parents brought her here because they wanted a better life for her.

Follow Up a Year Later

She got pregnant and have baby. She is taking courses at a training school to become a secretarial assistance. She still sells shoes at the market during the weekends because she considers that is a flexible schedule to allow her to care for her baby.

21st interview

This lady came originally from Jamaica. This is a young woman immigrated to The States along with her parents. She is a part time employee at a stand in the market. She sells household supplies such as light bulls, door nubs; she also offers lightweight tools.
She says that at first, when she just arrived in South Florida, she suffered a cultural shock and she felt isolated from the mainstream society but now she seems to be well adjusted to her surroundings. She is attending college and her goal is to become a medical doctor. She sees this job at the market as a temporary source of income that it helps her to get through college.

She seems to be a very independent and self-sufficient person.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She is no longer working at the market.

**22nd interview**

This lady came originally from Nicaragua. This is a very young woman that immigrated here with her parents.

She works part time at the market selling clothing items. She lives with her parents and sees her present job as temporary source of income. She plans to go to school and get a degree in order to obtain a good job.

She feels good in South Florida in spite of her lack of English knowledge

She seems to be a little shy but at the same time she is very friendly and cooperative person.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She is no longer working at the market.
23rd interview

This lady is from Nicaragua. She is a young girl that works at the flea market selling cloths, manly T-shirts.

She sees this job as a temporary source of income while attending school.

She wants to obtain a college degree and get a job that allows her to have a comfortable life.

She came to South Florida to join her parents that already lived here. She feels good living in The States. Although she is a lot shy, she was very cooperative and friendly.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is not longer working at the market.

24th interview

This lady came originally from Argentina. She is a part time employee at The Redland Harvest Market Village. She sells household supplies and small tools at a stand in the market. She also works at a warehouse during weekdays. She sees these jobs as a temporary source of income; in the future she plans to study English and eventually obtain a college degree in social studies and get a job as a social worker.

Right now she lives with her parents.

She is very goal oriented and self-sufficient person.

She is very conscious of her language limitations but at the same time, she is eager to do something about.
Follow Up a Year Later

She has taken another part time job within the market as a temporary source of income. She started to take night English classes at a high school.

25th interview

This Lady came originally from El Salvador. She sells harvest products at a stand in the flea market. The whole family participates in attending the stand and they share shores and responsibilities. This is her own business and she feels satisfied with it. She plans to continue doing the same type of occupation for a long time to say the least.

She sees this job at the market and her job at a plant nursery as permanent sources of income.

This is a very nice lady; she is surprisingly self-determined and open mind. Her husband did not want her to participate in this interview but she did it in spite of his negative attitude.

She came to the States to join her husband that was already here. During her first years of residence in The U.S. she felt isolated and lonely. Today, she feels comfortable living in South Florida where she can interact within the community in spite of the language barrier.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is continues selling at the same location. Her stand is one of the most frequented by costumers. Her business is doing well; she and her husband had rented
another stand next to hers, where they sell coco frio, which is coconut water, served in the nut.

26th interview

This lady came originally from Venezuela. She has a stand at the flea market where she sells household accessories such as decoration items for the kitchen, living room and also clothing accessories such as berets and hair bands.

This is a highly educated woman that came to The States from South America to continue her education. Once here, she met a man, from Cuba, and decided to get married.

She did not peruse her educational goals; which she regrets today.

She has one child and she also works at another flea market in South Dade where her dad owns a stand in which he sells suitcases and hand bags. In a near future she will like to enroll herself at one of the local college and finish her education.

She does not see these occupations at the markets as a permanent job and she is looking forward to improve her income with a better job. She is a nice lady; she was very interested in the objectives of this study.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is continues working at the same location. Her business is doing well and she still sells the same type of merchandize.
27th interview

This Lady came originally from Jamaica. She is employed at a stand in the market where she sells hardware products, small tools and electrical supplies.

This lady came here because her mother was already living in South Florida.

She is doing this type of job as a source of income while she is attending college.

She wants to get a degree in cosmetology.

She seems very self sufficient and independent woman.

She has goals to archive and specific ways to accomplish them.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is not longer working at the market.

28th interview

This lady came originally from Haiti. She owns a stand at the flea market in which she sells linen items such as tablecloths, towels, bed spreads, and napkins and so on. She also sells children cloths mainly girls dresses that she makes herself at home during weekdays.

She is a single mother of several kids, (about four), which she brings them along to the market during the weekends.

She sees this job as a permanent source of income for her and her family.

She worries a lot about her children’s future and which to establish a better and bigger business that shall give her and her kids a better chance in life. However, for now she plans to continue with her little stand at the flea market.
Follow Up a Year Later

She is still working at the market. Her business has grown bigger since the first interview. She offers a wider variety of products to her costumers.

29th interview

This lady came from a little town called Progresso in Honduras. She came to South Florida in her own account looking for a better life.

She chose South Florida as her new home because here where some close relatives living in Miami.

During the early years she worked at several add jobs that did not required a prior training or high skills, such as cleaning of private residences.

Later on she decided to invest in a business of her own in order to provided better for her two kids. She had been married in Honduras but got divorce shortly before coming to the U.S.

Today, she rents a little stand at the flea market where she sells clothing and work shoes accessories such as belts. Her teenage daughter helps her out with the costumers.

She is a lady with a lot of ‘spirit’. She whishes to continue her education at Miami Dade Community College and in the future own a bigger business or a restaurant.

She is very independent and feels that with her decision to immigrate to the US many doors of opportunities have opened for her. Now, as head of her household, she sees herself in control. She has the power of decision-making and freedom that she did not enjoyed in Honduras.
Follow Up a Year Latter

She still has her stand at the market. She has not been able to open a bigger business jet. She is trying to save some money to improve her stand and perhaps move out of the market to a better place.

30th interview

This lady came from Honduras. She is a young girl that helps her mother out in the weekends at a clothing stand at the flea market.

She does this job as a part time occupation while going to school. She does not consider this job as part of her future

She seems very determined and goal oriented.

She wants to obtain a degree and get a job in the U.S. federal government as a FBI agent.

She came to the U.S. because her mother was already here and she “send” for her.

She feels good in South Florida, living with her mother and brother.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is attending high school and still work part time at the market for an extra income.

31st interview

This lady came originally from Honduras. Initially, she came to South Florida with her kids to join her husband that was already here.
She rents a stand at the flea market where she sells lingerie and clothing accessories.

This is a very outspoken woman. She seems to enjoy having top position in the decision-making in her family affairs. She is a very independent and self-sufficient woman.

She feels satisfied with her present job and plans to continue to work on it.

She pointed out that the market (informal sector) gives her the opportunity to earn an income that along with her husband’s income is sufficient to take care of all her present needs and also her family’s needs.

**Follow Up a Year Later**

She continues to work at the market. Her stand is bigger and improved with a wider variety of merchandise to offer to costumers.

**32nd interview**

This lady came from Mexico.

This is a young girl that came to South Florida to join her parents.

She works at a music stand that her grandfather owns at the flea market. She sells Latin and folk music in compact discs.

She is doing this job as a temporary source of income while she is going to school.
She is a very shy person. During the early years she felt isolated because her lack of the official language, now she feels comfortable. She feels that a large range of opportunities are ahead of her once she finish her education.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is still working with her grandfather at their music stand. She is considering taking a different kind of work that will generate more income.

33rd interview

This lady came originally from Mexico. This is a young woman, a teenager that works as a part time helper as an ice cream vender outside the main building in the flea market. She still lives with her parents and sees her job as a temporary source of income while she is attending school. The ice cream stand where she works is owned by her mother.

She came to The States to join her mother that was already here.

She does not see the informal sector as a future place of employment for her.

She plans to continue in school and get a degree as a medical doctor.

She seems to be goal oriented and determined person.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is now working in the main food station with her mother. She prepares ice cones sells soft drinks and hot dogs. She is attending high school.
34th interview

This lady came originally from Cuba. She is a very young girl that came to The States to join her father.

She works at her father jewel stand in the flea market.

At the moment she lives with her father.

She sees this job as a temporary source of income, to meet some of her needs while she attends school.

Her goal is to obtain a degree in psychology.

She was very cooperative during the interview and eager to help.

She seems to be discontent with her father. In spite of that she feels pretty good living in South Florida.

Follow Up a Year Later

She is at the jewel stand along with her father assisting costumers. The business is doing fine; this is one of the jewel stands most frequented by visitors.

35th interview

This is a young girl from Mexico that works at a jewel stand at the main building. She is currently leaving with her parents.

She is doing this job, as a source of income in order to take care of her present needs. She does not plan to continue in the same type of occupation for a long period of time.
She is going to school and her goals include obtaining a college degree and getting a high stigmatized job that will produce a good income.

Follow Up a Year Later.

She is not longer working at the market.

36th interview

This is very out spoken lady from Mexico. She is an employee at one of the food stands located at the “food court” in the Market.

She presents herself as a very cooperative and kind person. She is married with adult and younger kids and she even have grand kids.

She came to the States because he husband had immigrated first to South Florida.

One of her major future goals is to open a restaurant of her very own.

In the future she sees herself in the gastronomic business maybe not in the informal sector but still in the same type of enterprise.

She seems a very independent woman in spite that she is married. She is married to second-generation immigrant from Mexican origin.

She resent her husband because, he points out that thanks to him it was possible for her to immigrate to the States.

Follow Up a Year Later

She still is working at the food curt. Her food place now is bigger and improved with a wide variety of dishes in the menu.
Second set of Interviews at *The Redland Harvest Market Village 5 Years After of the First set of Visits.*

**Woman I (interview 13: see chapter IV, table1, and Appendices)**

The first woman identified was a lady working at a plant nursery stand; she came from Hidalgo, Mexico. At the time of the first interview she was 57 years old. She continues to work at the market in the same stand, situated at the front entrance of the market. As before, she sells a variety of plants. Her business remains consistent with some fluctuations in the volume of sales due to the dynamics of the local economy. Her small business remains a low production enterprise that generates a limited income. Within her family circle, her status remains the same. She has limited decision-making power due to her financial input into the household, but her husband continues to be the household’s primary breadwinner. Inside her community she remains isolated from mainstream society due to her restricted assets. She does not have aspirations of expanding her business or of taking on a bigger entrepreneurial venture in the future.

She feels in control of her small business, which allows her a sense of empowerment and well-being, despite of her limited set of assets and access to the mainstream economy.

**Woman II (interview 2: see chap. IV, table1, and Appendices)**

The second lady approached came from Mexico; she was 66 at the time of the first interview. She owns a jewelry/folk music stand. Her husband took part in the Bracero’s program during the 1960’s. Currently her stand remains at the same location,
amidst the warehouse spaces located outside the main building, with minor changes, such as the introduction of automobile accessories, a larger variety of music CDs and a small selection of jewelry items. She has eliminated clothing items from her stand. Her socioeconomic status has not changed since her first interview. She has “hired” one of her grand-daughters as her assistant. The little girl is about 10 years old; she helps her grandmother sell the merchandise, as well as communicate with non-Hispanic costumers.

**Woman III (interview 9: see chap. IV, table1, and Appendices)**

This Colombian lady at the time of the first interview was 79 years old. She sells her merchandise at the main building. Her business has grown since her first interview. She rents three adjacent stands. She has hired her sister and another woman to help in manufacturing the garments and accessories, and attending to the costumers. She pointed out there are many spaces empty within the building in contrast with very few open in past years. She also explained that due to the crisis of the global economy her sales have been affected. Her fancy children garments are no longer in high demand as they had been in the past. At home, her state of affairs remains unchanged, and she enjoys her financial independence which has empowered her and allowed her to experience a sense of well-being. However, her interaction with mainstream society is minimal, keeping her isolated from it.

**Woman IV (interview 16: see chap. IV, table1, and Appendices)**

This Mexican lady at the time of the first interview was 54. She continues to rent a stand at the main building. She still sells jewelry, as well as repairing it, alongside her
partner. Her business has remained the same without any major changes. She explains that the volume of costumers has decreased. However, it is sufficient to keep her business open. She still feels disconnected from mainstream society, because of her lack of access to the official language, the informal nature of her business, and the clientele that frequents the market.

**Woman V (interview 34: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)**

This young Cuban woman was 16 years old at the time of the first interview. She sells jewelry at her father’s small stand. She continues working by her father’s side, despite her disapproval of his constant supervision. She is in charge of item sales while her father does small repairs. Her stand remains one of the most frequented by costumers. She has gotten used to working at the market because it generates a needed income and affords a flexible schedule that allows her to hold other jobs during the week days. She stills has aspirations of a better occupation, therefore she is taking courses at a night school. She feels more in control of her life due to her limited financial independence. However, she still resents her father’s patriarchal state of mind toward her.

**Women VI (interview 8: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)**

This lady came from Chile and at the time of the first interview was 46 years old. She has a stand at the main building where she sells shoes. Her business has not change at all between the time of first interviews and the latest one. At a personal level this woman is at ease with her current socio-economic situation. She explains that the market earnings along with her other occupation during weekdays, allows her to contribute to the total
household income. Her financial input into the household budget gives her room to bargain and allows active participation in decision making. This lady continues working at the market in spite of her intent at the time of the first interview to engage in bigger financial ventures in a near future.

**Women VII (interview 5: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)**

This lady is from Haiti and at the time of the first interview, she was 46 years old. She sells clothing for adults and children, as well as household cleaning supplies. Her business is the same size, and she sells the same type of items as she sold at the time of her first interview. She no longer needs her daughter translating from English to Creole. She explains that her little business at the market has given her the opportunity to interact with a wider range of people (English and Spanish speakers). She feels more in control of her life, in spite of her socio economic limitations.

**Woman VIII (interview 20: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)**

This is a young woman from Cuba, who at the time of the first interview was 25 years old. She continues to work at her mother stand. She sells shoes, bags and clothes for adults. Her business has remained the same since the first interview. She explained that this job is a source of needed extra income for her household. The informal nature of this business allows her to have her kids with her while at work. She considers the small market income a help in securing a limited financial independence at home.
Woman IX (interview 28: see chap IV, table 1, and Appendices)

This lady is originally from Haiti and was 46 years old at the time of the first interview. Her stand remains the same size and she still sells the same type of merchandise, dresses for girls which she makes herself, linens, and a few items for boys. She feels at ease with her business, although she complains that her customers are not purchasing as much as in the past. As a single parent and head of a household of five, she has to juggle her work at the market with a job during the weekdays at another location, and her household with four kids. Her small income generated at the market is of great help, allowing certain degree of self-sufficiency and empowerment. However, she wishes for a business that will provide her with a better income and simultaneously allow her to interrelate with the main economic sectors of the local economy.

Woman X (interview 31: see chap IV, table 1, and Appendices)

This Honduran lady was 41 years old at the time of the first interview. She rents a stand at the market where she continues selling undergarments for both men and women. As a single parent she considers her business at the market key to her economic stability and survival. She pointed out that although sales are not as good as before (her first interview) she had managed to stay in business. At home she feels in charge in spite of a tight financial budget. Her kids are all grown, so it is easier for her to distribute her small income.
Woman XI (interview 36: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)

This lady comes from Mexico and at the time of the first interview, she was 45 years old. She continues to work at the market’s food court. She said that the food stands at the market had multiplied in number. Every weekend, more costumers show up at the market, bringing with them their families. They come to socialize with their counterparts and share an ethnic meal. She feels that her earnings from the market help her contribute to her household income, as well as give her bargain room within her family circle. She still wishes to own a business where she can work independent and grow as an entrepreneur.

Woman XII (interview 1: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)

This lady comes from Haiti, at the time of the first interview she was 45 years old. She remains working at the market, selling the same type of merchandize, Household supplies such as china, tabletop wear, and cleaning products. She notes that she still wishes to open a beauty salon sometime in the near future. In the meantime, as a single mother, the market income along with additional income from her weekday job allows her to take care of the household. She considers her market-based business output good only as a part time venture.

Woman XIII (interview 3: see chap. IV, table 1, and Appendices)

This Cuban woman, at the time of the first interview, was 68 years old. She still has her stand at the market where she offers costumers supplies for garment manufacturing. Her business remains the same size although her merchandize seems out-
dated. As an older woman she is satisfied with her current state of affairs, although she explained that her sales inventory is not as good it used to be.